

# MEMPHIS POLL

2 0 0 5



Willie W. Herenton, Mayor

---

*City Vision: To be recognized globally as the city of choice  
in which to live, learn, work and recreate.*

# Table of Contents

Chapter	Title	Page
Chapter 1	Introduction	2
Chapter 2	Overall Citizens' Perspectives	7
Chapter 3	Service Priorities	13
Chapter 4	Concerns about Crime	17
Chapter 5	Police Services Division	23
Chapter 6	Fire Services Division	30
Chapter 7	Park Services Division	34
Chapter 8	Joint Agencies:  Memphis and Shelby County Health Department, Public Libraries, the Riverfront Development Corporation and MLGW	45
Chapter 9	Neighborhood Concerns	51
Chapter 10	City Divisions and Neighborhood Programs:  Public Services & Neighborhoods, Mayor's Citizen Service Center, Housing and Community Development, the Office of Planning and Development and General Services	58
Chapter 11	Public Works Division	69
Chapter 12	Communication with Citizens	82
Chapter 13	Comparison of Services	97
Chapter 14	Technical Issues	107

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The Herenton Administration is pleased to sponsor the thirteenth annual 2005 Memphis Poll. The first Memphis Poll was produced in 1993 and proved to be useful to both the Herenton Administration and the Memphis community. Mayor Willie Herenton conceived and continues to support the Memphis Poll. The City's Finance Division coordinates the Poll.

A separate *Executive Summary* has been prepared, which describes the major findings of the 2005 Memphis Poll in an abbreviated format. The full report, questionnaire, and the executive summary are available at the City of Memphis website: [www.memphistn.gov](http://www.memphistn.gov).

### **Purpose of the Memphis Poll**

The purpose of the 2005 Memphis Poll is to provide a procedure by which citizens' views can become part of the planning and budgeting process. The City views citizens as customers and its services as products. Like any successful business, the City is making a concerted effort to learn how satisfied citizens are with its services.

The Poll results help the administration set priorities and evaluate the quality of its services. This report and similar studies conducted in other cities suggest that citizens can effectively describe the quality of their City services. Citizens have the unique ability to define the services that they consider most important, which may or may not differ from the concerns of political leaders and administrators.

The Poll provides data for the current budget process and influences long-range City policies. The polling manager used scientific techniques and had an independent company collect the data. The analysis was conducted independently of both the company collecting the data and City of Memphis officials.

City officials offered editorial suggestions that made the writing of the Poll much stronger. This involvement of City officials is an important part of the process since it leads to their greater use of polling information.

Since the Memphis Poll has thirteen years of comparative data, the 2005 Poll includes extensive trend data for services and policies. The trend data are a “policy treasure” in that they show how services are perceived over an extended period. There are few cities that can claim a data set of this quality and magnitude.

The text below refers to the 2005 Memphis Poll, unless it specifically mentions the earlier Polls. The data are reported both in text and graphics that can be interpreted by the lay reader. Many of the trend charts compare the findings of all thirteen polls from 1993 to 2005.

The changes in City government after November 15, 2005 are not reflected in these Poll results.

## **Polling Method**

The Memphis Poll employed scientific polling procedures, including random digit dialing, to select the respondents. The polling process produced 911 respondents. The actual interviewing took place in late October and early November 2004 and the report was issued for use in the FY 2006 budget process. The preliminary results were provided to the Division of Finance in January 2005 and PowerPoint presentations were made to the Divisions of Public Works and Police Services in January 2005. The Executive Summary was provided in February 2005 and this report was made available in April 2005.

The 2005 Memphis Poll replicated procedures from the earlier Memphis Polls. The random sampling procedures resulted in a group of citizens similar to earlier Polls.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Poll reflected the white and African American populations of the City. It also reflected the geography of the City. It did not reflect the Hispanic population. Hispanics are under-represented in both the Memphis Poll and the U.S. Census. They are a difficult population to poll. Some suggestions have been made to the City on conducting a special poll of the Hispanic community. The Memphis Poll suggests that the City should partner with nonprofits, County, and State governments in such an effort. As an example, see Mary Powers, “Hispanics hit health care’s speech barrier”, Memphis Commercial Appeal, February 7, 2004.

The Poll results provide information on Citizens' assessments of a variety of programs and policies. The major categories of questions included actual services, policies, and concerns. The Poll asked tangible questions about City services.

The reader should not confuse the Memphis Poll with other polls reporting on similar topics. The Memphis Poll deals only with the perceptions of MEMPHIS citizens. The Poll examines issues, services, and policies directly affected by the City government. It also presents some information by section of the City in both figures and maps.

The Poll results reported response differences between African American and white respondents that were 10 percentage points or greater. For simplicity, percentage point differences in the report are called percentage differences.

Dr. Michael Kirby prepared the poll questions, formatted the survey, and computerized the results.<sup>2</sup> He also wrote the final report.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Kirby used the appropriate procedures to bring objectivity and balance to the report.

## **Poll Summary**

The 2005 Memphis Poll asked citizens to respond to 146 different questions regarding various issues. The results are displayed in 103 different charts, maps, and tables throughout this report.<sup>4</sup>

As with the previous Memphis Polls, the major conclusion of the 2005 Memphis Poll is that citizens feel positive about the City's services and its public policies. The overall rating for the City's services was 79 percent. This shows that the majority of citizens' believe that the city is doing a good job.

---

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Kirby, a faculty member in Urban Studies and an Associate Professor of Political Science at Rhodes College, has conducted many Memphis studies including the previous Memphis Polls. He has also served as a consultant on many national studies. Dr. Kirby specializes in the use of social science data for policy-making purposes.

<sup>3</sup> Numerous people worked on the poll and their contributions were invaluable. Yacoubian Research assisted with questionnaire formation and performed the actual interviewing. Tim Moreland edited the full report and provided some analysis. Kristen Fitzpatrick was the senior editor for the report. Becky Saleska provided valuable editorial suggestions for the last draft. Special thanks are due to Jacqueline Toney for coordinating the City efforts related to the Poll.

<sup>4</sup> It is not possible to provide more extensive information because the final report is already too long and complex.

There were an impressive number of services rated very highly by the citizens. These included the Fire Division (respectfulness, promptness, and performance), the EMS program (respectfulness, promptness, and performance), three Parks Division programs (the Pink Palace Museum, Zoo, and Botanic Gardens), the Public Works Division's Solid Waste Disposal (promptness in weekly solid waste pickup and recycling), and the Public Libraries (main branch, availability of material, helpfulness of staff, overall quality of branches, and availability of computers).

Citizens also identified some services about which they were concerned.

The lowest scoring service in the entire Memphis Poll was the citizens' rating of MLGW's cost of utilities—only 34 percent of the citizens thought that MGLW was doing a good job. The Poll also showed low levels of satisfaction with the public swimming pools.

Citizens were concerned about physical conditions in their neighborhoods. Citizens were most troubled about vacant lots and litter on streets. Citizens were also highly concerned about alley maintenance, drainage after rainstorms, and loose dogs.

Citizens were asked about their satisfaction when calling City Hall about a concern. Citizens were more positive about interaction (defined as phone professionalism and courtesy). In contrast, citizens were less satisfied with responsiveness (defined as promptness and solving the problem). However, these results were improvements over previous years of the Memphis Poll.

However, the 2005 Memphis Poll found widespread and historically low levels of satisfaction among whites compared to African Americans in their calls for services to City Hall.

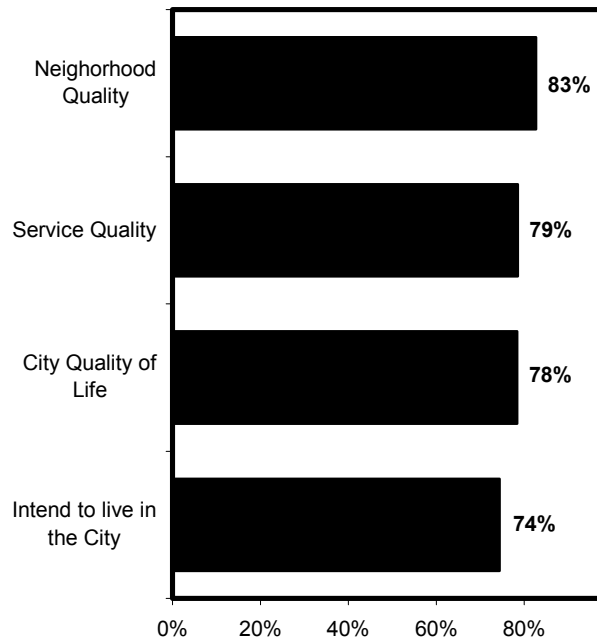
# Chapter 2

## Overall Citizens' Perspectives

### Overall Assessment

This analysis of the Memphis Poll begins by examining the overall citizens' assessment of the City and its services. Figure 2-1 provides four broad measures in the Memphis Poll that address the overall citizens' perception of the city and its government.

**Figure 2-1: Overall "Quality" Assessment by Citizens**



The Memphis Poll measured overall neighborhood quality. Specifically, the Poll asked citizens if they thought their neighborhoods would be a better place to live, about the same, or a worse place to live one year from now. Figure 2-1 shows that 83 percent of the citizens thought that the quality of their neighborhoods would be either the same or a better place to live.

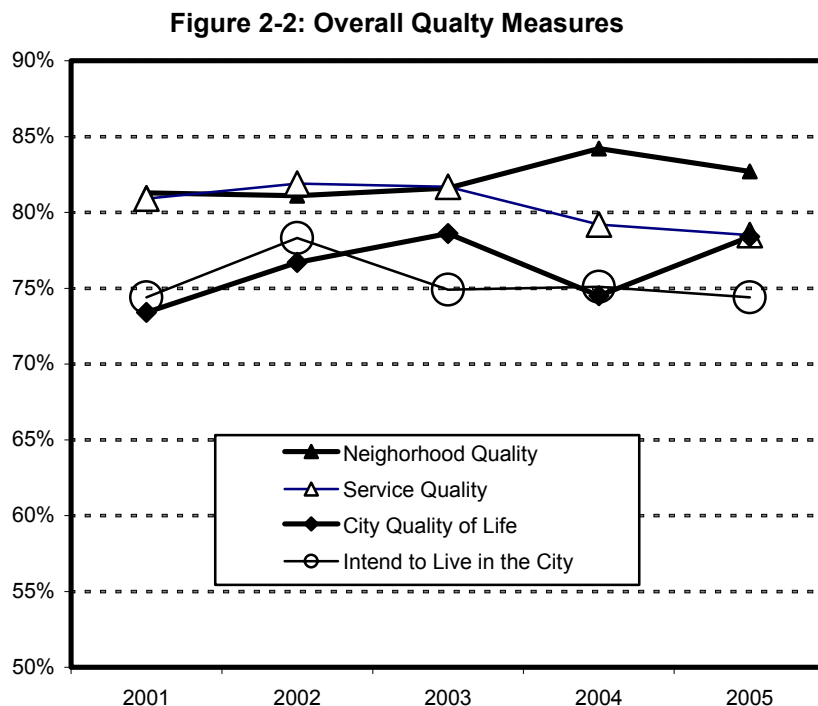
Service quality refers to the citizens' satisfaction with the delivery of City of Memphis public services. It is a measure of overall citizens' satisfaction with City services. Figure 2-1 shows that the citizens viewed service quality as positive with 79 percent of the citizens agreeing that the City did a good job of delivering services.

The Memphis Poll also measured quality of life with a broad question. Citizens were asked if they were satisfied with Memphis as a place to live. Figure 2-1 shows that 78 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City. The responses to this question indicated an overall positive assessment of the City. Whites were less satisfied than African Americans about the City's quality of life.

Citizens' intent to remain living in the City is another overall quality of life assessment tool. If citizens intended to move, there might be some "push" factors, such as their economic circumstances, neighborhood conditions, or City services affecting their decision to consider moving. Figure 2-1 shows that 74 percent of the citizens had no intention of moving from the City in the next two years.

## Trend Data

Next, Figure 2-2 shows the trends in the overall quality measures for the years of the Memphis Poll for which all these data were collected. The trend lines represent the data from 2001 to 2005.



Neighborhood quality is in roughly the same range as in the previous four years of the Poll. The finding about overall neighborhood quality is positive news since citizens have been consistently optimistic about the future of their



neighborhoods. However, as discussed in Chapter 9, citizens had concerns about the physical conditions of their neighborhoods.

It appears that the trend line for intending to continue living in the City has remained in the same range since 2001.<sup>5</sup> Although this assessment appears to be accurate given the trend line, the discussion below suggests there are important demographic changes in the overall trends.

In contrast, service quality, as depicted in Figure 2-2, shows a slight two-year decline. Because the change in the trend line is subtle, it remains to be seen if this decline will continue into the 2006 Memphis Poll.

City quality of life is more difficult to judge since the results appear to be more volatile. In 2001, 74 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's quality of life. After two years of steady increases, City quality of life dropped in 2004. But by 2005, the measure had risen again to 78 percent. It remains to be seen in the 2006 Memphis Poll whether the 2005 results indicate a return to a higher quality of life rating.

## **Sections of the City**

The four measures of overall quality were examined by sections of the City. These sections provide specific information on the geography of the City. However, the data must be used carefully since each individual section had only a limited number of respondents.<sup>6</sup> The responses for the four measures were averaged for each section of the City. Figure 2-3 displays the results with the most positive areas at the top, while Figure 2-3 provides the same data for the least positive overall responses.

Figure 2-3 highlights the most positive responses by section of the City for the four measures.<sup>7</sup> Northside, Southwest, and Southside had the highest overall rating. Southwest and Downtown had the highest ratings for neighborhood quality. Southcentral had the highest rating for service quality. Southside and

---

<sup>5</sup> The measure includes both the citizens who indicated that they had no intention to move or they intended to move within the City in the next two years.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 14 for a discussion of the sections of the City.

<sup>7</sup> Each measure was viewed contextually and the highest responses were discussed. The areas are listed in order of their overall positive response rate. Only the very highest responses were discussed for most positive perceptions and only the very lowest responses were discussed for the least positive responses.

Southcentral had the highest rating for City quality of life. Northside had the highest rating for intending to live in the City.

**Figure 2-3: Most Positive Perceptions by Area**

Area of City	Neighborhood Quality	Service Quality	City Quality of Life	Intend to Live in City	Overall Score
Northside	83%	81%	80%	89%	83%
Southwest	91%	78%	81%	82%	83%
Southside	88%	80%	84%	80%	83%
Southcentral	79%	86%	84%	75%	81%
Downtown	91%	81%	79%	67%	80%
Midtown	89%	73%	72%	80%	79%
Eastside	86%	79%	74%	68%	77%
Northeast	72%	74%	84%	72%	75%
Northwest	76%	78%	74%	66%	73%
Fareast	80%	76%	67%	67%	72%
Southeast	72%	78%	78%	61%	72%

Figure 2-4 examines the same data for areas of the City with the least positive perceptions of the overall quality indicators. Southeast and Fareast had the lowest overall scores when the four items were averaged. Both of these areas included large sections that were annexed into the City—an explanation that City administrators often point to when discussing these findings.

**Figure 2-4: Least Positive Perceptions by Area**

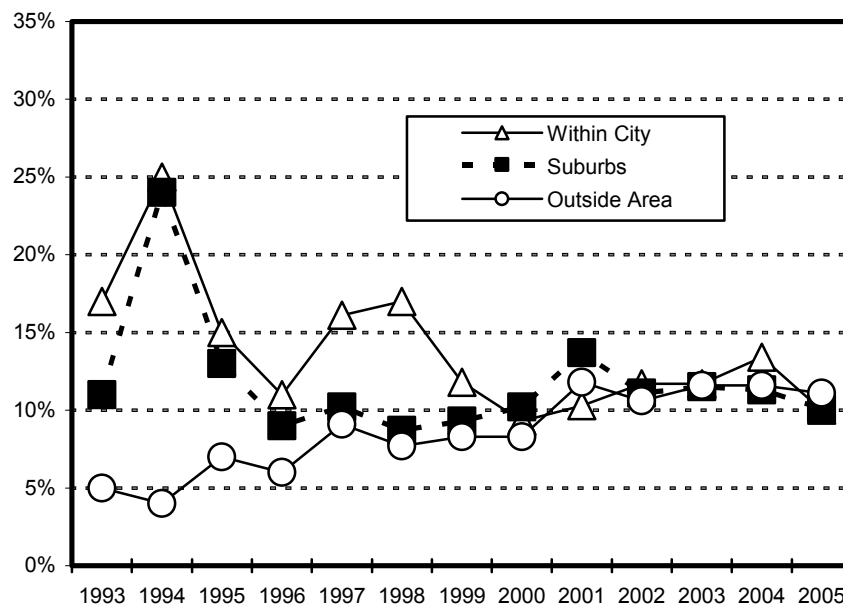
Area of City	Neighborhood Quality	Service Quality	City Quality of Life	Intend to Live in City	Overall Scores
Southeast	72%	78%	78%	61%	72%
Fareast	80%	76%	67%	67%	72%
Northwest	76%	78%	74%	66%	73%
Northeast	72%	74%	84%	72%	75%
Eastside	86%	79%	74%	68%	77%
Midtown	89%	73%	72%	80%	79%
Downtown	91%	81%	79%	67%	80%
Southcentral	79%	86%	84%	75%	81%
Southside	88%	80%	84%	80%	83%
Southwest	91%	78%	81%	82%	83%
Northside	83%	81%	80%	89%	83%

The Southeast and Northeast areas had the least positive scores for neighborhood quality. Midtown had the lowest score for service quality. Fareast had the lowest rating for City quality of life. Southeast had the least number of citizens intending to continue living in the City.

## Intention to Move

Next, the Memphis Poll provides more detailed information on the citizens' intentions to move. The migration issue is important since the City of Memphis has seen a decline in its population base during the last 20 years. The information in this chapter has important consequences for the fiscal health of the City. Citizens who remain in the City are taxpayers and customers who finance City services. The movement to the suburbs is especially important to monitor because the suburbs are the direct residential competitors with the City of Memphis. The suburbs include any area within the metropolitan area located outside the City boundaries. The metropolitan area includes Shelby County, West Tennessee, North Mississippi, and East Arkansas.

**Figure 2-5: Citizens' Mobility—Planning to Move within Two Years**



Citizens who indicated an intention to move within the next two years were asked where they intended to move. Figure 2-5 provides data for all thirteen years of the Memphis Poll. Figure 2-5 shows that the findings for 2005 are in the normal range for the recent trend data. About 10 percent of citizens planned to move to each of the following areas: within the City, to the suburbs, and outside the greater Memphis metropolitan area.

**Figure 2-6: Citizens' Stayers—  
Planning to Remain in the City**

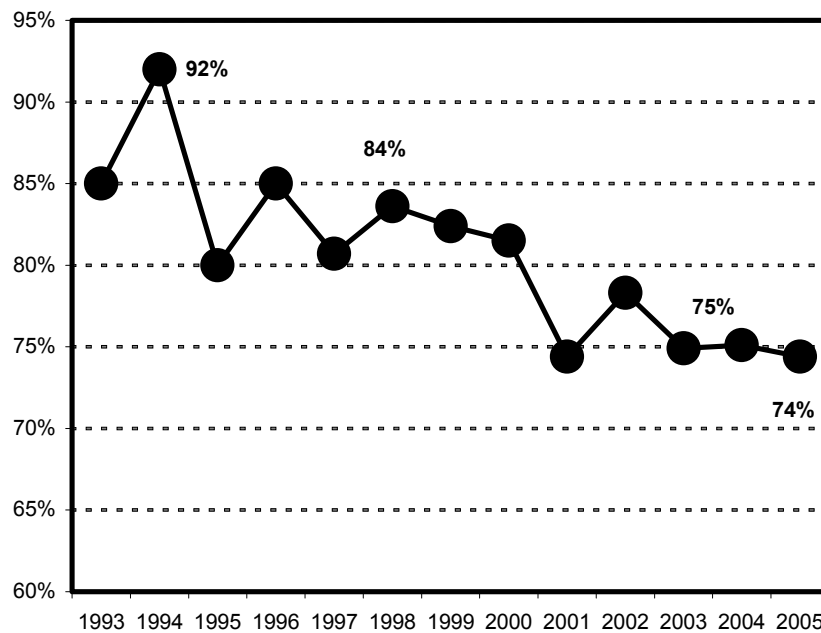
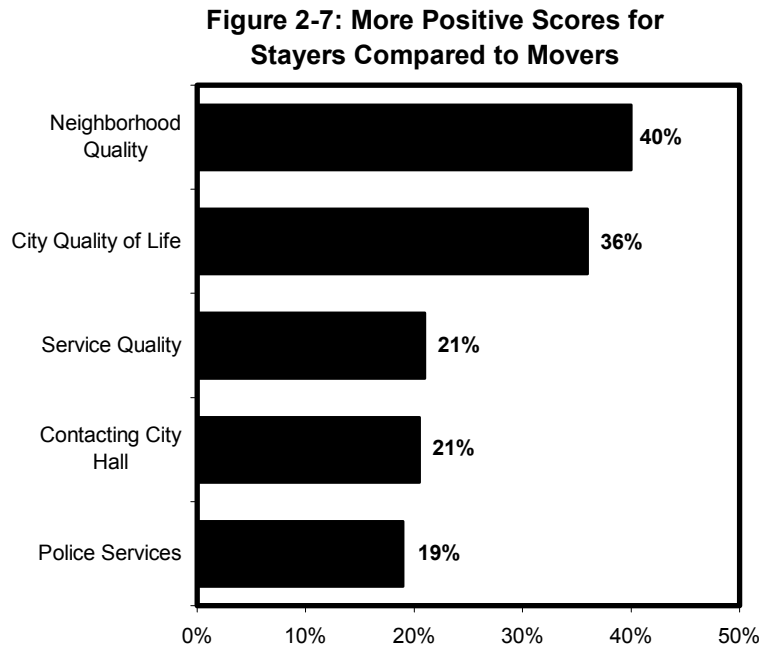


Figure 2-6 examines the trend lines for those planning to remain within the City. This measure is the sum of those not planning to move and those planning to move within the city. Figure 2-6 shows there has been a steady decline in those planning to remain in the city over the years of the Memphis Poll. For example, in 1994, 92 percent of the citizens planned to remain in the City, while by 2005 that result was down to 74 percent. However, the results for the last five years have been at roughly 74 percent.

Next, the Memphis Poll examined some of the factors that may have an impact on the Citizens' decisions to stay within the City or to move elsewhere. The scores for "movers" (those planning on moving outside the City) were subtracted from the scores for "stayers" (those not planning on moving or who planned to move within the City) for a variety of measures. Only the very highest differences for the two groups were used. In fact, there were many other measures that also showed a difference. As a result, we ask the reader to use these data very carefully.

Figure 2-7 shows that stayers were considerably more apt to have positive perceptions of neighborhood quality and City quality of life. Overall, these two factors were twice as explanatory as the next highest measures.



Three additional factors seemed to have the next highest relationship to staying or moving: overall service quality, positive perceptions when contacting City Hall with a concern, and overall score for police services. The common denominator is that these were all service delivery measures.

## Race and Intention to Move

Figure 2-8 shows important differences between African American moving patterns and white moving patterns. The percentages of whites and African Americans intending to move were about the same. However, this is a dramatic difference from the 2004 Memphis Poll when whites were 19 percent less likely to move than African Americans.

The poll found that African Americans were 12 percent more likely to stay in the City than whites.

Figure 2-8 shows where the citizens intended to move. African Americans were 35 percent more likely to move within the City. They were also 7 percent more likely to move within Shelby County.

In contrast, whites were 25 percent more likely to move outside the metropolitan area and 16 percent more apt to move to the suburbs outside of Shelby County.

**Figure 2-8: Race and Planning to Move**

Type	Whites	African Americans	Whites minus African Americans
Planning to Move	37%	35%	1%
Planning to Stay in City	66%	79%	-12%
<b>Moving Where</b>			
Within City	10%	44%	-35%
Shelby County	15%	22%	-7%
Suburbs Outside Shelby	24%	8%	16%
Outside Metropolitan Area	52%	27%	25%

### Key Findings

- ❑ Overall Citizens' assessment of the City's quality remained high.
- ❑ Residents of the Northside, Southwest, and Southside areas had the most positive overall assessment of the City.
- ❑ Residents of Southeast and Fareast areas had the least positive overall assessment of the City.
- ❑ Although the percentages of whites and African Americans intending to move were similar, there were striking racial differences in *where* citizens intended to move. African Americans intended to move within the City areas and to Shelby County, whereas whites intended to move outside the metropolitan area or to the suburbs outside Shelby County.
- ❑ Perceptions of overall neighborhood quality and City quality of life appeared to be the two most important factors in intending to move out of the City.

## Chapter 3

# Service Priorities

This chapter examines the importance that citizens attached to various City services. Decisions to improve specific services can be based on those services to which citizens attached a greater priority.

This is an especially important chapter since it provides a perspective for viewing services and concerns. The reader should match the evaluation for a specific service (for example, police) to the level of importance that the citizens attach to the service area (for example, crime prevention). Citizens may view a service area as very important, but they may perceive that the level of the service delivery is mediocre. Or, citizens may perceive a problem as very extensive, but the citizens may attach a lower priority to solving that problem.

The 2005 Memphis Poll introduced some changes in the way priorities were addressed. The City was interested in more extensive information that could be used for a goal setting process. New items were added on social services, economic development, and construction of entertainment facilities. Several other items were consolidated and several items were eliminated to streamline the questionnaire.<sup>8</sup>

Citizens were asked how important various priorities were to the overall quality of Memphis. Figure 3-1 shows the percent of citizens who thought the priorities were “very important” to the overall quality of Memphis. Figure 3-2 reports differences between African American and white citizens.

### **Tier 1: High Priority Service**

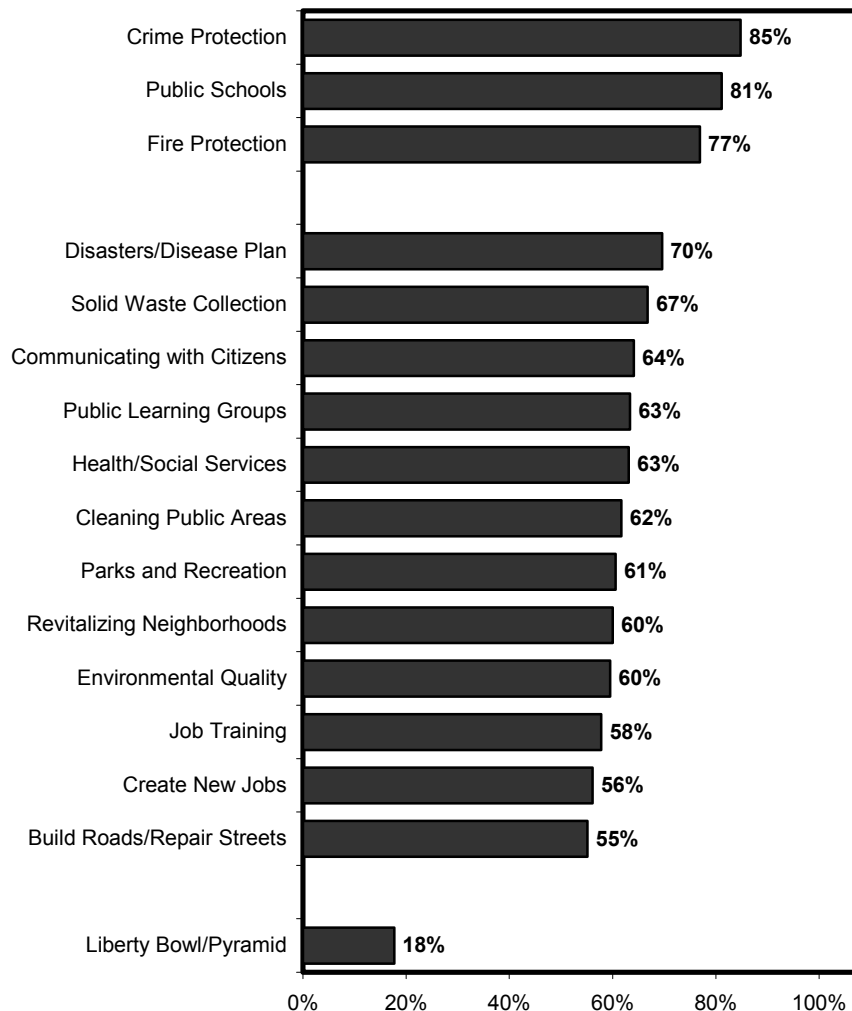
Crime protection received the highest priority ranking by the citizens. Figure 3-1 shows that 85 percent of the citizens thought police protection against crime was the most important service provided by the City. Crime protection has been at the top of the priority ratings in every year of the Memphis Poll in which this information has been collected.

---

<sup>8</sup> There might be some yearly changes in these questions. The 2006 Memphis Poll might consider removing the social services’ questions and add questions on utilities, speeding on neighborhood streets, downtown/riverfront, and health issues. The item on streets will be split into two questions related to maintenance and construction.

Citizens also identified funding public schools at 81 percent and providing fire protection at 77 percent as high priority services. These priorities have ranked highly in previous Memphis Polls.

**Figure 3-1: Citizens' Ranking of Service Priorities**



## **Tier 2: Moderate Priority Services**

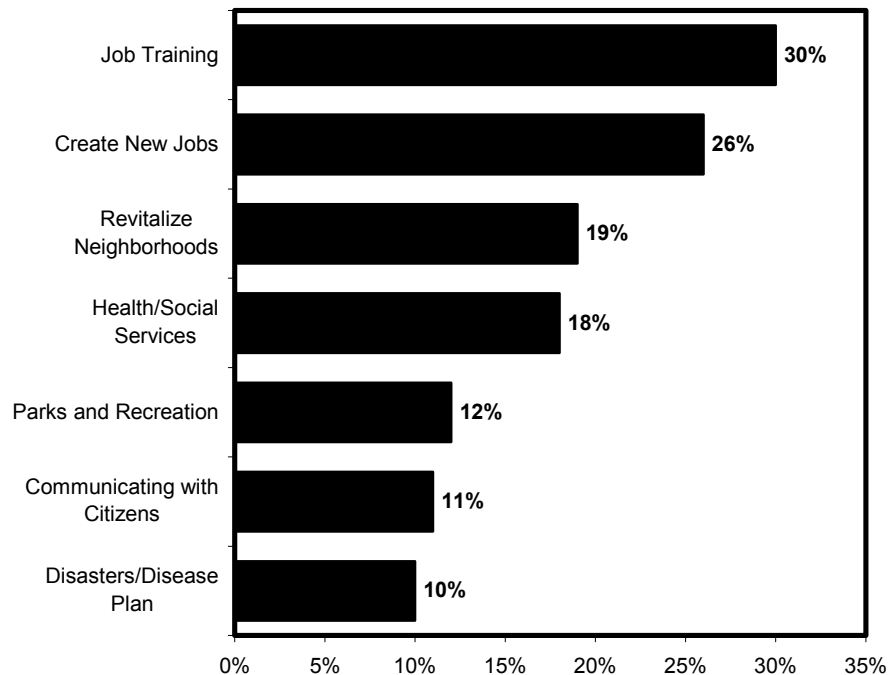
The second tier is categorized as moderate priority services. As displayed in Figure 3-1, priorities in this tier received scores between 55 and 70 percent of citizens viewing the services as very important. The Tier 2 priorities included: planning for disasters and diseases (70 percent), solid waste collection (67 percent), communicating with citizens and responding to their requests, (64 percent), funding public learning groups such as the public libraries, the Zoo, museums, and arts (63 percent), providing health/social services (63 percent),



cleaning public areas by street sweeping, picking up litter, and mowing vacant lots (62 percent), providing recreational programs and park facilities for children and adults, (61 percent), providing programs to revitalize neighborhoods, reduce decay, and provide affordable housing (60 percent), addressing the environmental quality of the air, rivers, and streams (60 percent), providing job training and skill development programs for unemployed and under-employed Memphians (58 percent), providing financial aid to businesses to help create new jobs within the City (56 percent), and building new roads and repairing existing streets (55 percent).

Overall, the revised terminology used in this chapter was useful in identifying City priorities. However several items require further comment. In the past, repairing existing streets was a separate item and normally it ranked near communicating with citizens, which would have put it in the middle of the rankings. Because it was combined with building roads, the new road item was rated at the bottom of the second tier ranking. The earlier 2004 Memphis Poll suggested that citizens are far more supportive of repairing existing streets than building new roads.

**Figure 3-2: Citizens' Ranking of Service Priorities -  
Difference in Perceptions for  
African Americans Compared to Whites**



The items on parks and recreation combined previous items for adults, children, and seniors. In past years the parks and recreation rankings for children/seniors were considerably higher than those for adults.

As displayed in Figure 2-3, African Americans ranked the following priorities higher than whites: providing job training, creating new jobs, revitalizing neighborhoods, providing health/social services, providing parks and recreation, communicating with citizens, and planning for disasters/diseases.

### **Tier 3: Lowest Priority Services**

The 2005 Memphis Poll included a new priority item related to the construction costs associate with large entertainment facilities. The specific item asked if funding improvements to the Liberty Bowl Stadium and Pyramid were very important.

According to Figure 3-1, funding improvements to the Liberty Bowl Stadium and the Pyramid were by far the lowest priorities for citizens at 18 percent. This result is the lowest priority score for any item ever included in the history of the Memphis Poll. To give a perspective, this result is 67 percent lower than the highest priority of crime protection, 44 percent lower than cleaning public areas, (which is in the middle of the priority rankings), and 37 percent lower than the next lowest item—building roads/repairing streets.

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ Crime protection had the highest priority of any City services. It was closely following by funding public schools and providing fire protection.
- ❑ Funding improvements to the Liberty Bowl and Pyramid was the lowest rated priority in the entire history of the Memphis Poll.

# Chapter 4

## Concerns about Crime

This chapter examines the citizens' assessments of crime in their neighborhoods. It also provides information about specific types of crime-related concerns. When interpreting the data in this chapter, a higher number means that citizens were more concerned about crime. A trend line that moves down suggests that citizens were less concerned about crime over time.

### Indicators of Specific Crimes

This section describes the portion of the Memphis Poll that deals with citizens' perceptions of specific crimes in their neighborhoods. A select number of crime-related indicators were examined to detect how well City services were addressing problems most immediate to the citizens' living space. This chapter is important since citizens described the quality of their immediate living environment.

Figure 4-1 presents the data as the percentage of citizens who saw each listed crime issue as a serious problem.<sup>9</sup> The specific indicators selected were four of the most relevant issues for many Memphians. Violent crime is considered the most serious of all crimes. Burglaries were concerns by many because criminals are entering a person's home or other premises. Drug sales are seen as contributing to the seriousness of crime. Membership in a gang is not a crime, but it is perceived by many that gangs extensively contribute to criminality.

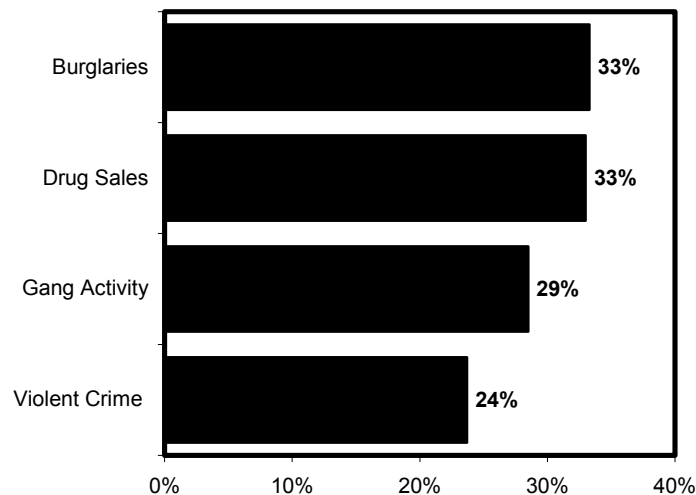
Figure 4-1 shows that concerns about specific crime items were extensive. Burglaries and drug sales were the highest with 33 percent of the citizens were concerned about these problems in their neighborhoods. Gang activity with 29 percent and violent crime with 24 percent were next on the list of concerns.

---

<sup>9</sup>Citizens' concerns may or may not be influenced by the crime that actually occurs in the neighborhood. These data deal with concerns about crime and not the actual level of crime. The questions were developed to determine whether crime were concerns within the neighborhoods. Crime occurs in areas other than neighborhoods and the data may not be directly comparable to reported crime. The polling data are not directly comparable to reported crime since a number of reports could be generated from a single household. Not all crime is reported to the police. The polling measures reflect concerns about particular types of crime, rather than a reflection of the total number of crimes. Several crime-related items do not translate directly into reported crime categories. The two areas of specific concerns most applicable to police department statistics are violent crime and burglaries.

The extensiveness of crime concerns is reflected when these data were combined. Forty-seven (47) percent of the citizens expressed concerns for at least one of the crime items. In contrast, 13 percent of the citizens expressed concerns about all four of the crime items.

**Figure 4-1: Citizens' Concerns About Specific Crime Problems in Neighborhoods**



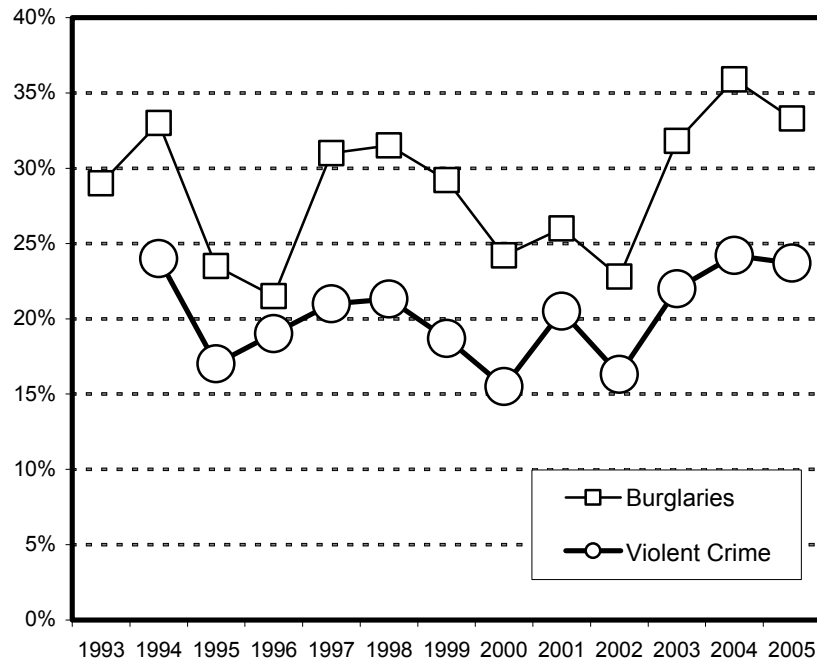
African American citizens expressed more concerns than whites about gang activity (12 percent) and drug sales (15 percent).

## **Trends in Crime**

Figure 4-2 examined trend data for burglaries and violent crimes. The data suggest clusters of variation over the years of the Memphis Poll. Burglaries have been consistently within 5 percent – both above and below – the 30 percent mark. Similarly violent crimes have consistently ranged 5 percent above and below the 20 percent mark.

The data for 2004 and 2005 suggests the concerns for these two crimes may be stabilizing, albeit at a high rate. However, there is a need to wait until the next Memphis Poll to determine if this is an emerging trend.

**Figure 4-2: Citizens' Concerns About Burglaries and Violent Crime**



**Figure 4-3: Citizens's Concerns About Gangs and Drug Sales**

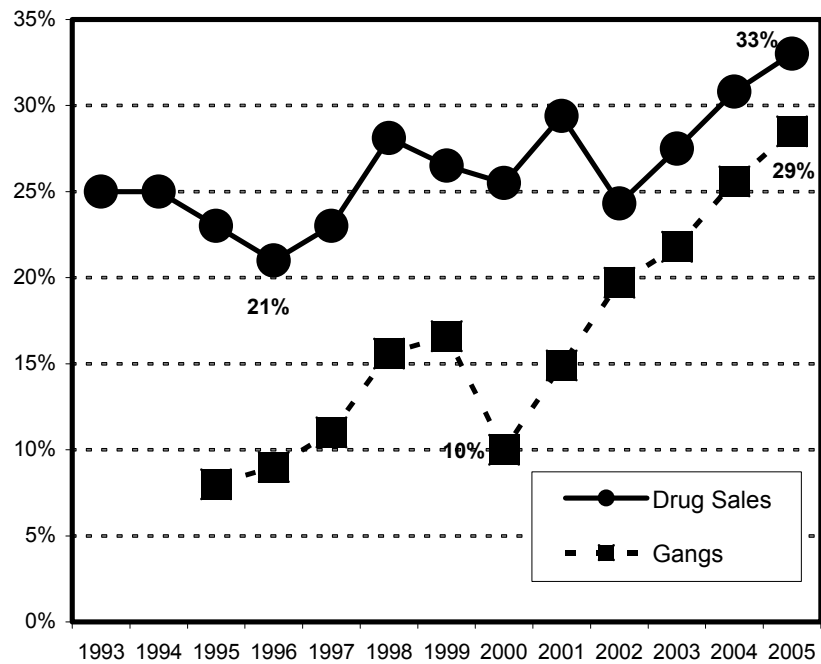
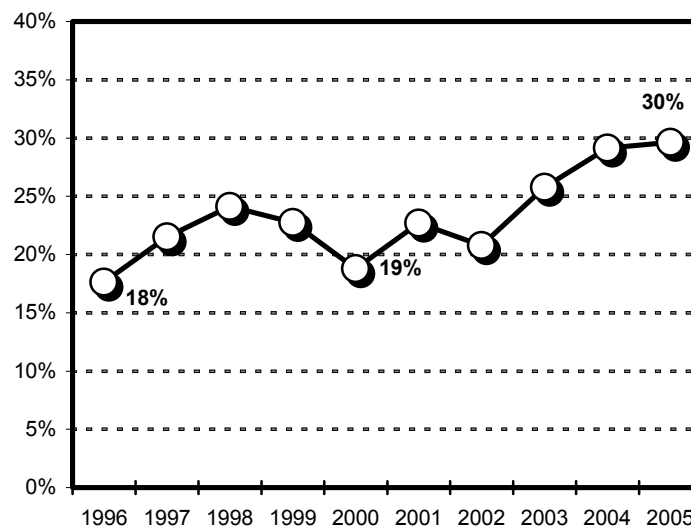


Figure 4-3 shows citizens' concerns about drug sales and gangs are increasing. Over the last 5 years there has been a substantial increase in concerns about gangs, from 10 percent in 2000 to 29 percent in 2005. Concerns about drug sales have increased by 8 percent over the last three years. Concerns over drug sales and gangs are at the highest level in the history of the Memphis Poll.

Next, the Memphis Poll combined these four specific indicators into an index. An index provides a summary measure of the data, which can be examined over time. Figure 4-4 shows the numerical average over the years for which all of the items were used. This data indicates increasing overall concerns for these four very important crime categories, although the data level off in 2004 and 2005.

**Figure 4-4: Averages for Citizens' Concerns  
About Specific Crimes Trends**

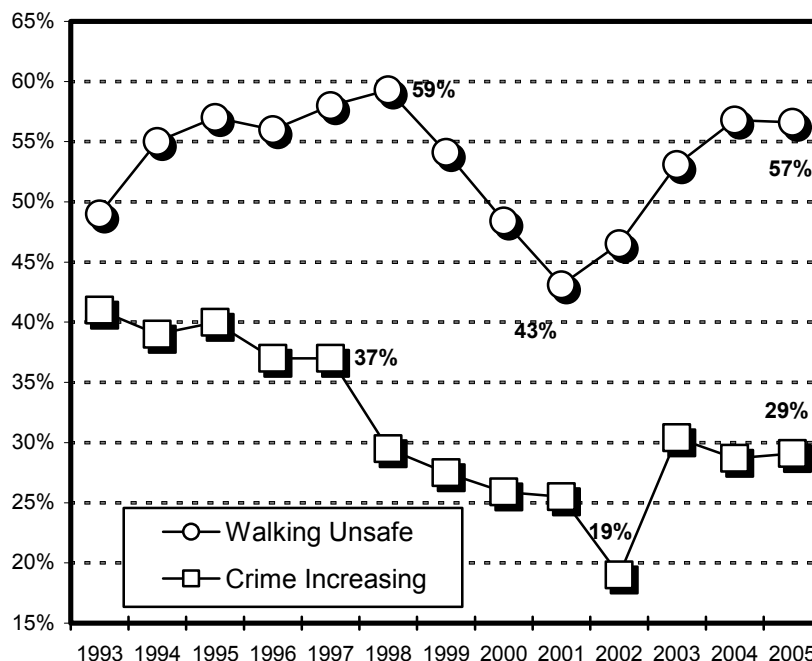


## Overall Assessment

The Memphis Poll next examines a more general perception of crime in the citizens' neighborhoods. Specifically, the Poll asked Memphis citizens whether they thought crime rates in their neighborhoods were increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. The question specifically limited the answer to the past year and to the citizens' neighborhoods. The question referred to crime in a general nature, rather than specific crime categories.

Figure 4-5 shows that 29 percent of the citizens perceived crime as increasing in their neighborhoods. This is approximately the same level of overall concerns as seen in the last two years. In addition, this stabilizing of overall crime-related concerns came after a very large increase in the 2002 Memphis Poll.

**Figure 4-5: Citizens' Perceptions of Overall Neighborhood Crime and Safety**



The Poll also examined citizens' perceptions of personal safety. The Poll asked citizens whether they felt safe walking alone at night in their neighborhood.<sup>10</sup> Figure 4-5 displays the results of the question on personal safety. The 2005 Memphis Poll showed that 57 percent of the citizens felt unsafe walking alone at night. The data suggest increasing concern about personal safety since 2001, when this trend appeared.

## Sections of the City

The Poll examined the trend data to determine whether specific sections of the City expressed higher levels of concerns regarding crime in 2005 compared to 2004. The Poll examined the results by area of the City to identify sections that may have experienced an increase or decrease in crime-related concerns of at least 10 percent over the previous year. The positive finding is that the 2005 Memphis Poll did not have any areas with increases in crime concerns that met

<sup>10</sup> The actual question asked the citizens if they felt safe or unsafe walking alone in their neighborhood at night. Figure 4-4 graphs the results for unsafe so it is consistent with crime increasing. The results would have been the same if safe had been used, although it would have been inconsistent with the direction of the other measures in this section.

this criterion. In contrast, two areas, Southcentral and Fareast, met the criteria of having fewer concerns about crime.

**Figure 4-6: Percent Decreasing Concerns about Crime Comparing 2005 and 2004**

Areas	Percent Less Concerns 2005 than in 2004
SouthCentral	10%
Fareast	11%

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ Concerns over gangs and drug sales continued to rise and were at their highest level in the history of the Poll.
- ❑ Overall, concerns about overall crime may be stabilizing, albeit at high level of concerns.



## Chapter 5

# Police Services Division

The previous chapter showed that citizens were concerned about crime in their neighborhoods. It is an assumption of this Poll that police can make a difference in crime rates by their policies and activities on the street. As a result, it is thought that the police bear the responsibility for positive or negative crime results.

However, other agencies also have a responsibility for assisting in crime prevention. For example, prevention programs dealing with youth may reduce crime. If this were the case, the Park Services Division would have some responsibility in this area. It could be suggested that programs such as community centers, after school programs, and summer day camps are related to the crime prevention efforts of the City.

In addition, support for neighborhood-based activity, the function of the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods, is a powerful crime prevention tool. An influential study showed that neighborhoods could reduce both crime and physical disorder through “collective efficacy”. Collective efficacy means that neighbors take responsibility for preventing crime through social ties, awareness, and intervention in cases of crime and disorder.<sup>11</sup>

### Perceptions of the Police

The Memphis Poll asked a series of questions about Citizens’ perceptions of the activities of police officers in the citizens’ neighborhoods. The Poll examined citizens’ perceptions of the police in terms of respectfulness, promptness, crime prevention, and performance.

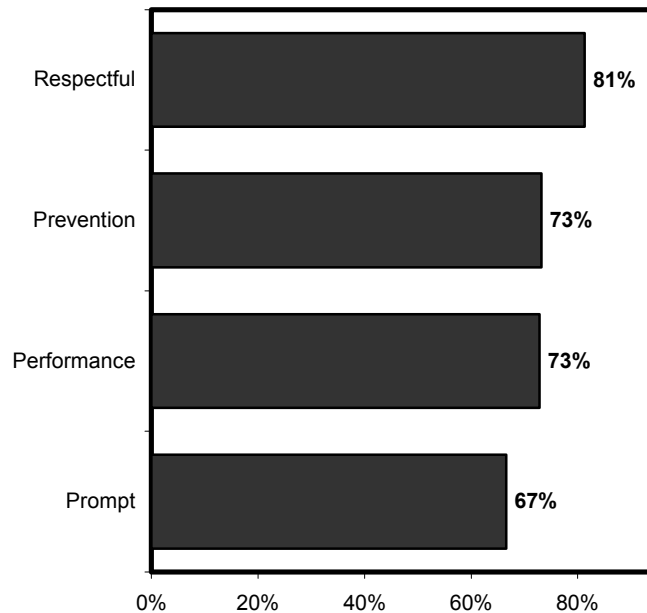
Respectfulness is one of the most important questions in the Memphis Poll because of the importance of police-community relations. This is often referred to as police legitimacy, which is required if the community is to work closely

---

<sup>11</sup> A former Memphian, Felton Earls, has been identified with these research findings in the local media and by the police. See Robert Sampson, Stephen Raudenbush, and Felton Earls, “Neighborhood and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy,” *Science*, volume 277, August 15, 1997, pp. 918-924; Robert Sampson and Stephen Raudenbush, *Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods—Does it Lead to Crime?* Washington DC: National Institute of Justice, February 2001; and “Encouraging news from the crime front,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, January 11, 2004.

with the police. Citizens rated police most favorably on respectfulness. The Poll asked citizens whether police were respectful to people in their neighborhood. This question gauged the perception of personal treatment of citizens in their neighborhoods and not in the City as a whole by the police. Figure 5-1 shows that 81 percent of respondents agreed that the police were respectful. This result is slightly higher than the overall rating for City services, which was 79 percent.

**Figure 5-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Division of Police Services**



The Poll asked how effectively the police prevented crime. Figure 5-1 shows that 73 percent of the citizens agreed that the police were doing a good job in the prevention of crime.

The Poll also explored how citizens perceived police performance during calls for service. Figure 5-1 shows that 73 percent of the citizens agreed that overall police performance was good during the call for service.<sup>12</sup> This question is one of the most important in the entire Memphis Poll since it only questioned citizens that had contact with the police in calls for services. In many cases, these calls for services was at the request of the citizens and therefore citizens may have been approaching police with a positive view of police services.

The Poll also asked citizens if police were quick in answering calls in their neighborhoods. This question examined the issue of response time and promptness by obtaining citizens' perception of how quickly police answered

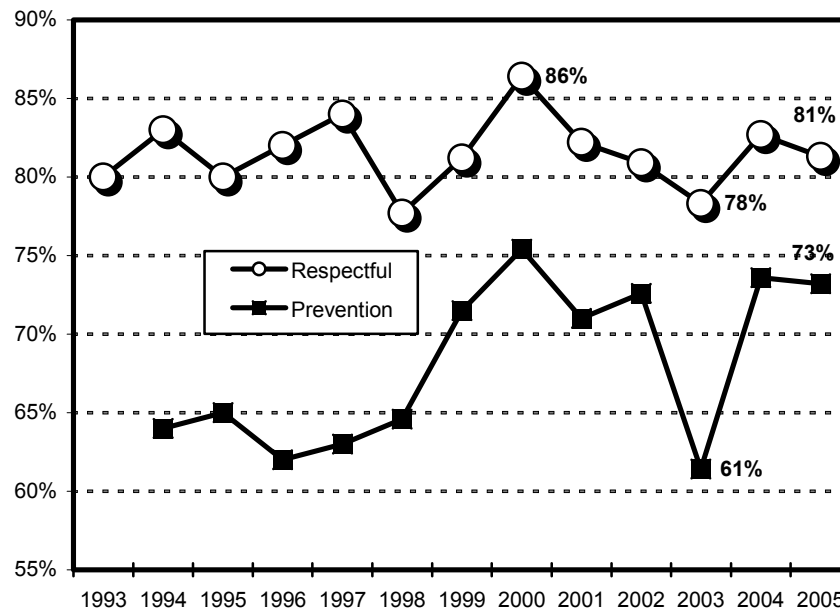
<sup>12</sup> The Director of the Division of Police Services asked that the 2006 Memphis Poll also include questions on other interactions between police and citizens, including traffic stops.

calls in their neighborhood. Figure 5-1 shows that 67 percent of the respondents agreed that the police were prompt.

## Trend line

The Memphis Poll has examined changes in the four measures of police services over many years. These trends provide the basis for comparing how services were viewed from one year to the next. For instance, an upward sloping trend line would indicate improvement in citizens' perceptions of the service, whereas a downward slope would indicate a decline in perceptions. Figure 5-2 shows the trends for respectfulness and prevention, while Figure 5-3 show the trends for performance and promptness.

**Figure 5-2: Citizens' Perceptions of Police Services:  
Respectfulness and Prevention**



The trends for respectfulness are very positive. Figure 5-2 shows that since the first year of the Memphis Poll, the scores for respectfulness have ranged from 78 percent to 86 percent. The results for 2005 were within this range. However, the Poll results from 2000 to 2003 showed small, but perceptible, annual reductions in respectfulness ratings. The 2006 Memphis Poll could see either the return to that trend or a continuation of the more positive results seen in this Poll.

The results for prevention are also positive. Figure 5-2 shows that citizens rated police prevention near the highest level in all the years of the Memphis Poll. This trend is attributable to a dramatic improvement in prevention ratings in 2004, which was maintained in the 2005 Memphis Poll.

Police performance reflects citizens' perceptions of the quality of the officers' work when they responded to calls for services. Performance is one of the most important interactions being measured, since only those citizens calling for services were asked this question. The trend results in Figure 5-3 are very positive. The 2005 results are near the highest ratings for performance from 1993, the first year of the Memphis Poll. In addition, there have been three years of incremental and consistent improvements in the ratings from 2002 to 2005. These ratings are more positive than in 1998 when the police reached the lowest point in its performance ratings.

**Figure 5-3: Citizens' Perceptions of Police Services:  
Performance on Call for Service and Promptness**

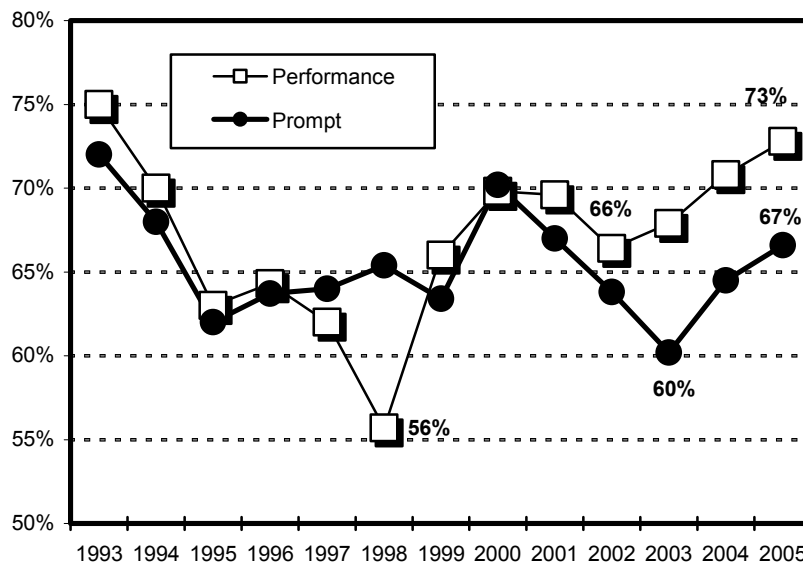


Figure 5-2 also provides information about citizens' ratings about police promptness. After falling 10 percent between 2000 and 2003, promptness ratings have improved over the last two years, reaching 67 percent in 2005.

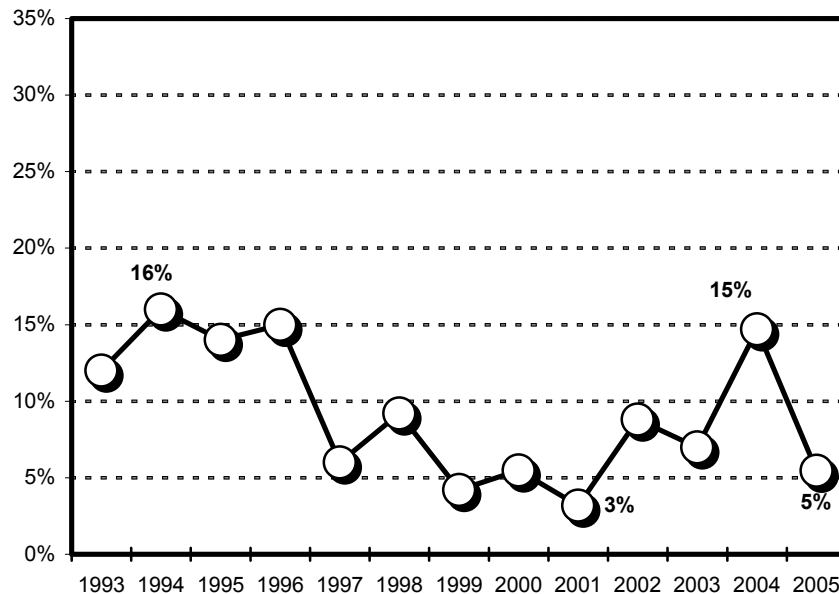
## Race and the Police

The Poll calculated the differences in the scores for each of the four indicators for whites and African Americans. Those four values were then averaged to show that the differences in responses between African Americans and whites.

Figure 5-4 shows that the average difference in 2005 between African Americans and whites on the police indicators was 5 percent. In this case a drop in the line reflects less difference between whites and African Americans in perceptions of the police—and a more positive finding. The averages in this figure show

increasing positive results. The difference between African Americans and whites is at almost the low point in the years of the Memphis Poll and showed an improvement of 10 percent when compared to the 2004 Memphis Poll.<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 5-4: Police Services Average Difference for African Americans & Whites**



However, African Americans were more concerned than whites about police respectfulness.

## Speeding on Neighborhood Streets

The Memphis Poll examined citizens' concerns about speeding on streets in their neighborhoods. The police department also has a responsibility for reducing speeding through enforcement strategies.

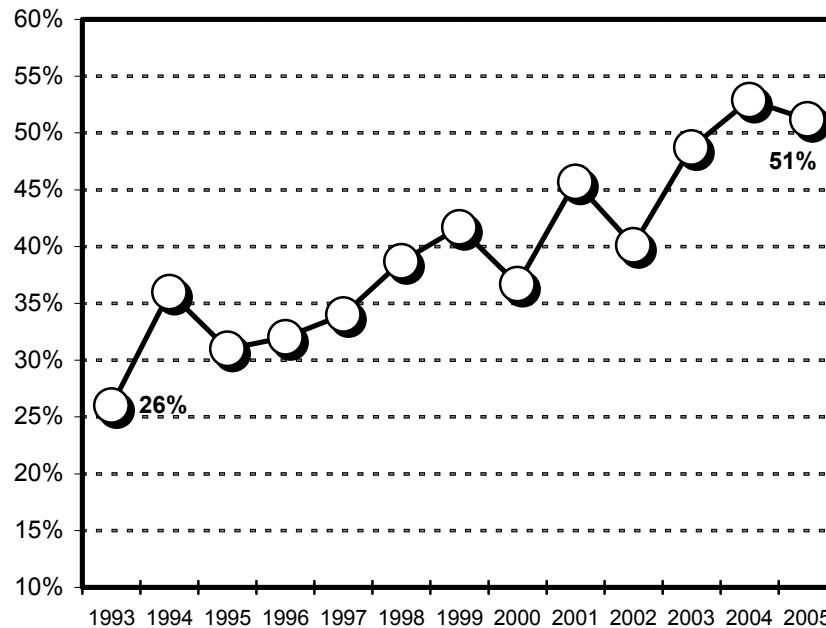
Figure 5-5 shows increasing levels of concerns about speeding on neighborhood streets from the first year of the Memphis Poll. The figure shows that 26 percent of the citizens were concerned about speeding in 1993 and that percentage has consistently increased over the years of the Memphis Poll to 51 percent in 2005.

However, there are limitations to these findings. Speeding deals with neighborhood streets and does not indicate citizens' concerns about speeding on major streets or expressways in the City. Although speeding was identified as

<sup>13</sup> The measure of performance showed that African Americans had slightly more positive perceptions of the police and respectfulness showed improvements over the previous years of the Memphis Poll.

the largest neighborhood concern, citizens did not rate the slowing of traffic speed on City streets as important as many other City priorities.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 5-5: Citizens' Perceptions of Speeding on Neighborhood Streets as a Problem**



### Key Findings

- ❑ The 2005 Memphis Poll indicated substantial and consistent improvements in positive Citizens' perception of police performance and promptness.
- ❑ African Americans' and whites' ratings of police services were somewhat similar, which was a very positive finding of the 2005 Memphis Poll.
- ❑ Citizens continued to express increasing concerns about speeding on neighborhood streets, although they did not rank this priority as highly as many other City priorities.

<sup>14</sup> See the 2004 Memphis Poll for information on the lower priority that citizens attach to abating speeding on neighborhood streets. See the 2002 Memphis Poll for information that citizens did not support specific solutions for dealing with speeding on neighborhood streets.

## Chapter 6

### Fire Services Division

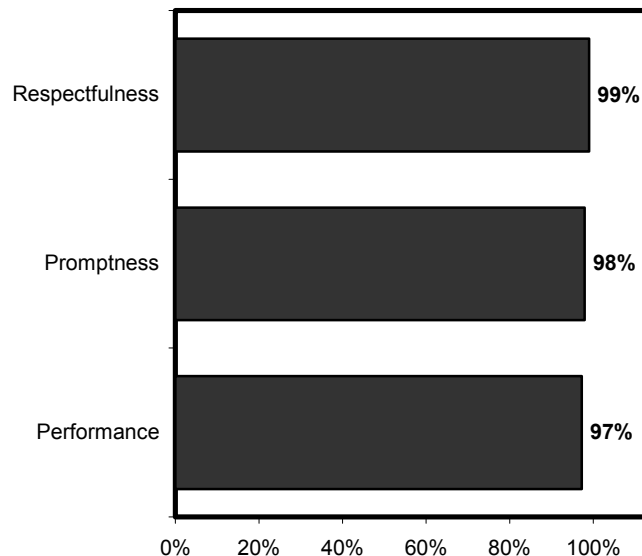
The Fire Division includes both a fire fighting component (called the fire department in this report) and an ambulance/emergency services component (called EMS in this report).

#### The Fire Department

The Poll asked citizens about their perceptions of the fire department. The results are illustrated in Figure 6-1. Each of the three service measures were among the highest scores in the entire Memphis Poll.

Citizens were asked if they agreed that fire department crews were respectful to people in their neighborhood. This statement attempted to gauge the perceptions of citizens' treatment by fire department personnel in the field. In addition, the question focused on the fire department's treatment of citizens in their neighborhood and not in the City as a whole. Ninety-nine (99) percent of the citizens felt that the fire department's crews were respectful.

**Figure 6-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Fire Department**



The Poll also asked citizens if the fire department was prompt in answering calls in their neighborhoods. This question examined the issue of response time by obtaining Citizens' perceptions of how quickly the fire department arrived at

their destination. Figure 6-1 shows 98 percent of the citizens agreed that the fire department was prompt.

The Poll then examined how citizens perceived the performance of the fire department during calls or contacts for services. Ninety-seven (97) percent of the citizens were satisfied with the fire department's performance during calls for services. Whites were less satisfied than African Americans with fire department performance.

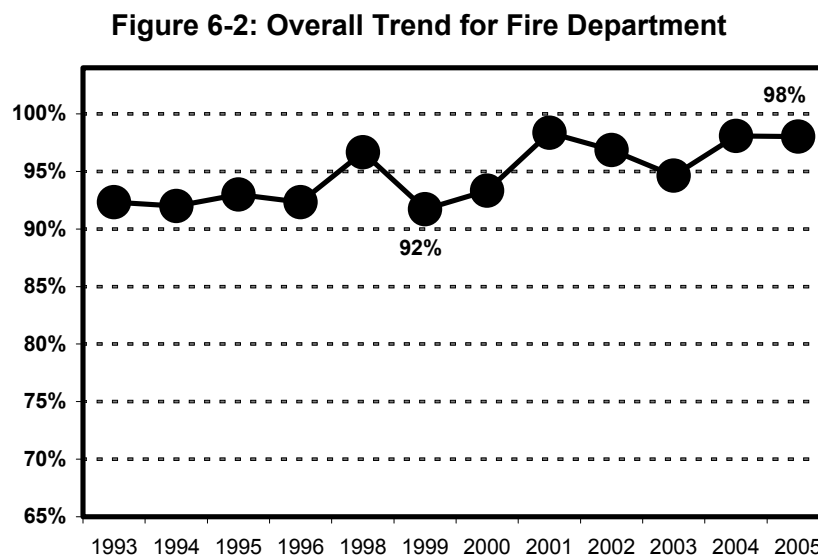


Figure 6-2 provides the overall trend data for the fire department when the three measures are averaged. The overall rating for the three measures was 98 percent in the 2004 and 2005 Memphis Poll, an impressive result that has not been duplicated by any other division of City government. This figure also shows that the fire department's ratings have been 90 percent or higher during the thirteen years of the Memphis Poll.

According to the citizens of Memphis, the fire department is an exceptional public service and over time it has been the leading division in the City of Memphis.

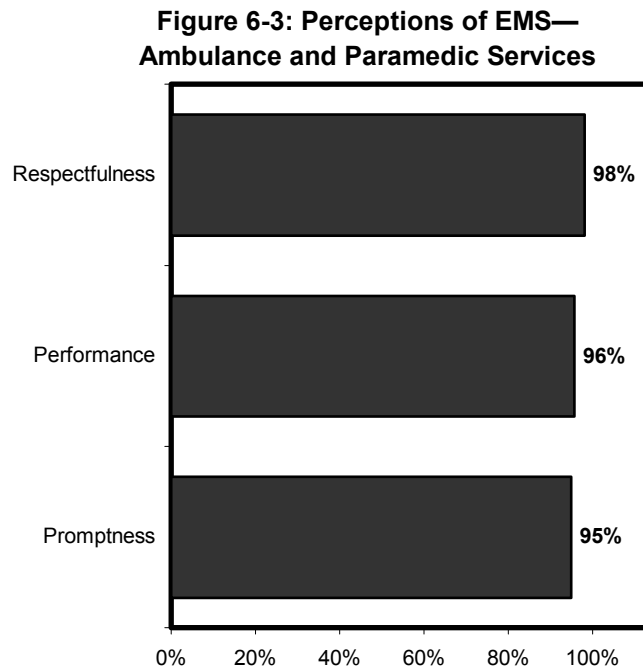
### **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

Prior to 2003, the Memphis Poll combined the calls for the fire department with emergency services to obtain a single score for both of the services. Starting in



2003, separate questions were asked about the City ambulance and paramedic services, called EMS. Figure 6-3 presents the results for emergency services.

Citizens were asked if they agreed that EMS crews were respectful to people in their neighborhood. A very high 98 percent of the citizens felt that EMS crews were respectful.

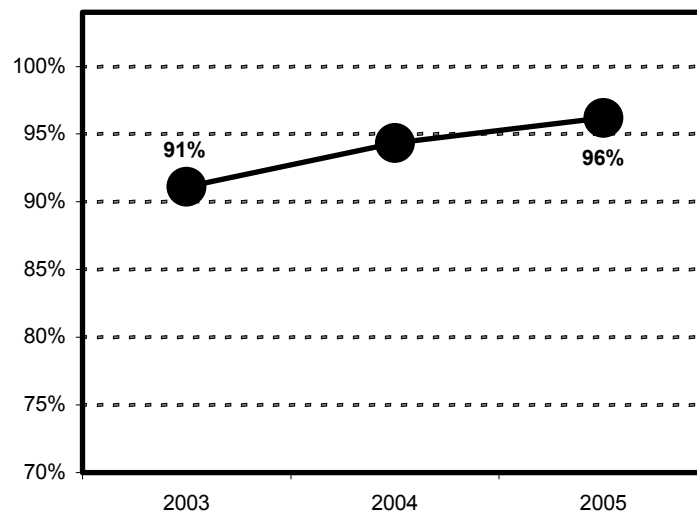


The Poll next examined how citizens perceived the performance of the EMS during a call or contact for service. Ninety-six (96) percent of the citizens were satisfied with the EMS crews' performance during a call for service.

The Poll also asked citizens if the EMS crews were prompt in answering calls in their neighborhoods. Figure 6-3 shows that 95 percent of the citizens were satisfied that the EMS crews were prompt.

Next, the Memphis Poll examined the three years of trend data available for EMS. Figure 6-4 shows the averages of the three indicators. Overall, EMS improved from 91 percent in 2003 to 96 percent in 2005. All of the average scores for EMS from 2003 to 2005 exceeded 90 percent. This finding showed that citizens considered EMS one of the strongest services provided by the City of Memphis.

**Figure 6-4: Overall Trend for EMS—  
Ambulance and Paramedic Services**



### **Key Findings**

- ❑ The Fire Division was the highest rated division of City government.
- ❑ Both the fire department and EMS ambulance and paramedic services were highly rated.

# Chapter 7

## Division of Park Services

This chapter describes citizens' perceptions of programs delivered by the Division of Park Services. It includes a discussion of both recreation programs (such as community centers) and public learning facilities (such as the Pink Palace Museum).

**Figure 7-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Quality of Park Services**

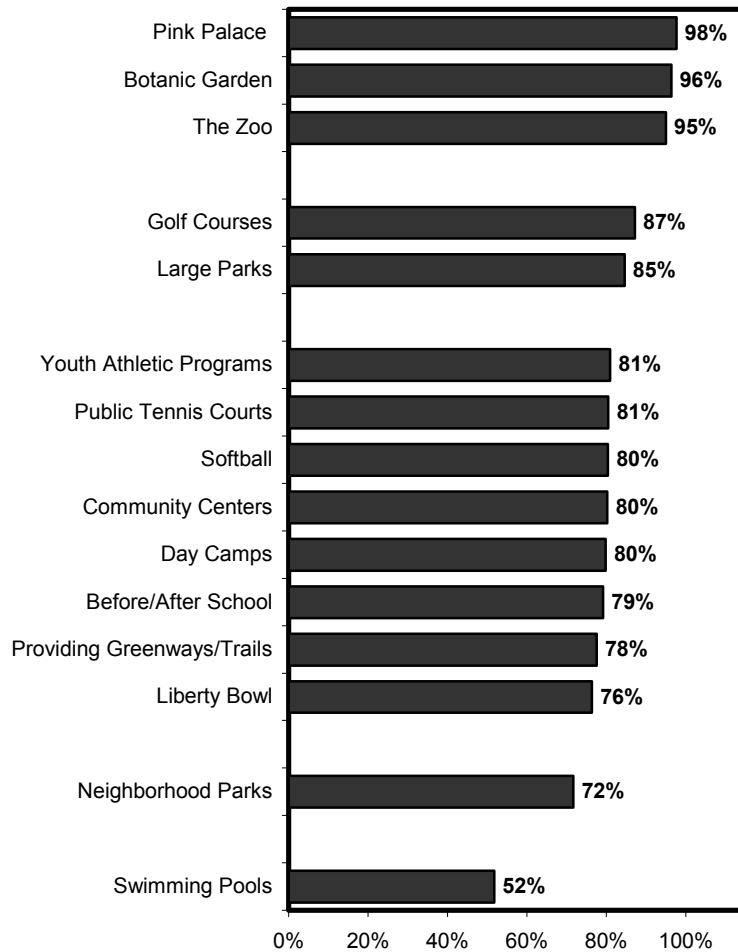


Figure 7-1 shows the percentage of citizens expressing positive views of specific park services. The results in this chapter should be carefully compared to Chapter 3, which shows how citizens prioritized park services when compared to other City services. In addition, the specific ratings for park services' programs should be compared to the overall score for City services, which is 79 percent.

The Parks Division administers many different programs. There were some variations in citizens' perceptions about the quality of its services. Figure 7-1 divides the services contextually by examining the clustering of services.

Tier 1--Exceptional Services: The highest levels of citizens' satisfaction were found for three programs: the Pink Palace Museum, the Botanic Garden, and the Zoo. Figure 7-1 shows that 95 to 98 percent of the citizens expressed positive views of these programs. These three programs were among the highest ratings in the entire Memphis Poll.

Tier 2--Effective Services: These services were categorized as effective if 85 to 87 percent of the citizens graded the service as good. Effective services included golf courses (87 percent) and large parks (85 percent).

Tier 3--Respectable Services: Respectable services ranged between 76 and 81 percent. The services in this category were near the average for the overall rating of City services. Respectable services included youth athletic programs (81percent), public tennis courts (81percent), softball (80 percent), community centers (80 percent), summer day camps (80 percent), before and after school programs run by the Parks Division (79 percent), providing greenways and trails (78 percent), and Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium (76 percent).

Tier --4 Under Performing Service: An under-performing service was on the lower end of the parks services' ratings and needs improvement. Only one service, neighborhood parks, was under-performing with only 72 percent of the citizens expressing satisfaction.

African Americans were more concerned than whites about neighborhood parks.

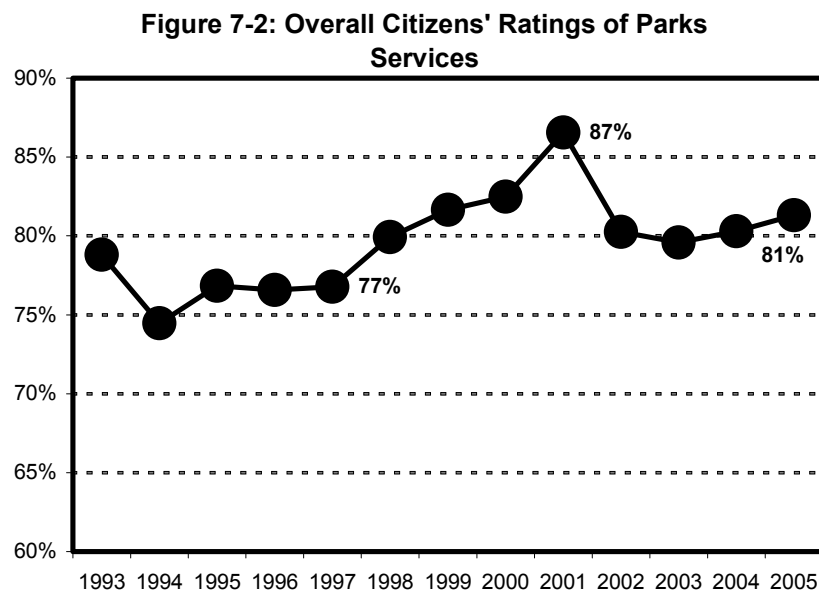
Tier 5 – Marginal Service: A marginal service was among the weakest in the entire Memphis Poll and it should receive special scrutiny for that reason alone. Figure 7-1 shows that only 52 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the public swimming pools. African Americans were more concerned than whites about public swimming pools.

## **Trend Data**

The Memphis Poll combined all of the services to obtain overall citizens' ratings of park services' programs. Figure 7-2 shows that the ratings stabilized at

around 80 percent for the most recent time period of 2002 to 2005. The rating for park services is slightly above the overall rating of 79 percent for all City services. As described in the following sections, the overall rating, though very positive, reflects a wide range of both positive and less positive ratings for specific programs.

Another important feature of the ratings in Figure 7-2 was the gradual and consistent improvement from 1997 to 2001. For example, in 1997, seventy-seven (77) percent thought the park services were effective compared to 87 percent in 2001. However, in 2002 the ratings dropped to 80 percent and have remained at that level for subsequent years. Staff members of the Parks Division attribute the reduction to budget problems that have kept them from properly funding maintenance activities.



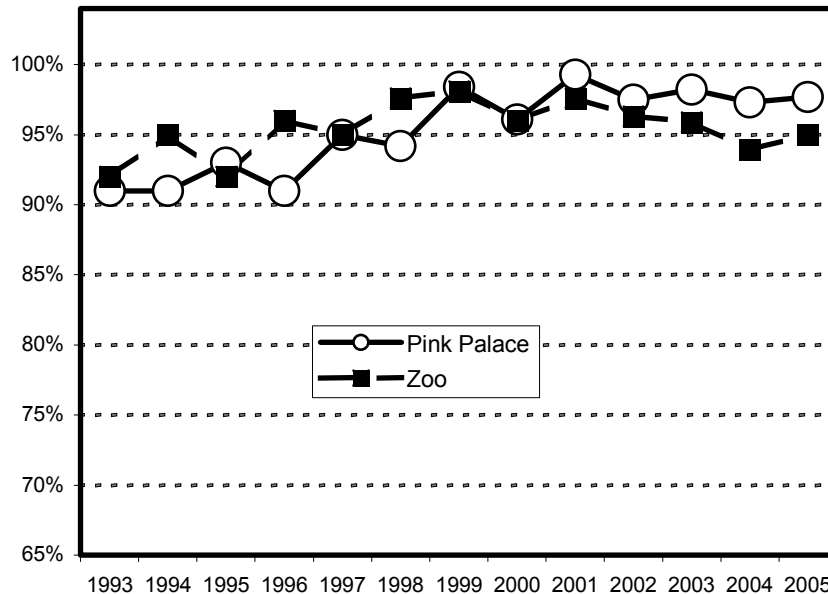
## Specific Services

This section examines trend data for the specific services provided by the Division of Park Services. Some trend data are available for the entire thirteen years of the Memphis Poll, while other trend data are available for fewer years. Services are grouped into several figures since it is difficult to display a large number of lines on a single figure.

The theme that emerges is that there is wide variation in the performance of park services' programs over time. Some services had stable citizens' ratings, some showed impressive improvements, and other services had declining ratings. The

reader should note which services were improving, which were not improving, and how these changes relate to the City and the Division of Park Services' priorities.

**Figure 7-3: Citizens' Perceptions of Zoo and Pink Palace**



According to the citizens, the Memphis Zoo, the Memphis Pink Palace Museum, and the Memphis Botanic Garden are three of the most effective City services. Figure 7-3 shows that the Zoo and Pink Palace have never had a score below 90 percent in the thirteen years of the Memphis Poll. In addition, these services have shown gradual improvement since the beginning of the Poll. Overall, these two services are very impressive.

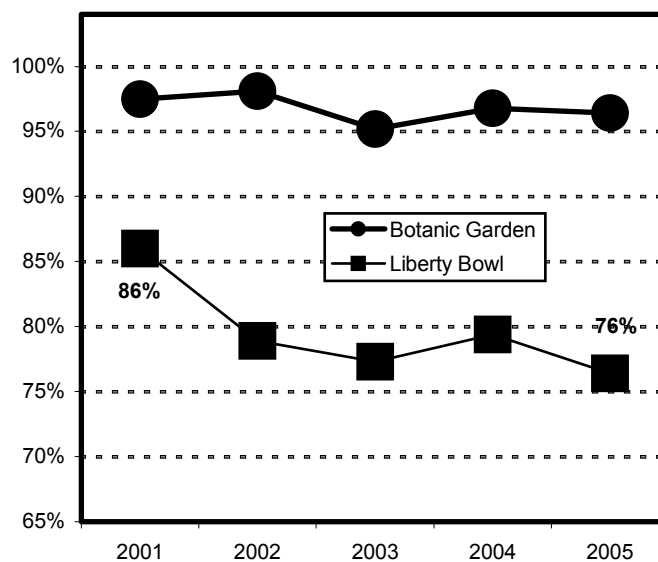
Citizens also saw the Botanic Garden as a very impressive service. The Memphis Poll has only measured citizens' perceptions of the Botanic Garden since 2001. Figure 7-4 shows that the citizens viewed the Botanic Gardens as equal to the Pink Palace Museum and the Zoo. The trend data have been consistently high for the Botanic Garden, ranging from 95 to 98 percent.

In summary, the Zoo, the Pink Palace, and the Botanic Gardens are "signature" services of the City and they have enjoyed impressive scores over time.

Next, the Memphis Poll examined the Liberty Bowl Stadium for the five years in which data have been collected. Perceptions of the Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium have declined from 86 percent in 2001 to 76 percent in 2005. However,

this finding needs to be placed into the context of citizens' priorities about public services. Chapter 3 shows that support for improving large public entertainment facilities, such as the Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium and the Pyramid, were the lowest priority of any public service ever measured in the Memphis Poll. Citizens detected that the Liberty Bowl facilities were less impressive than in 2001, but that the citizens are overwhelmingly opposed to spending public funds on entertainment facilities. In addition, the citizens' rating of 76 percent is only slightly below the average for all city services and thus the citizens view the Liberty Bowl as an adequate service.

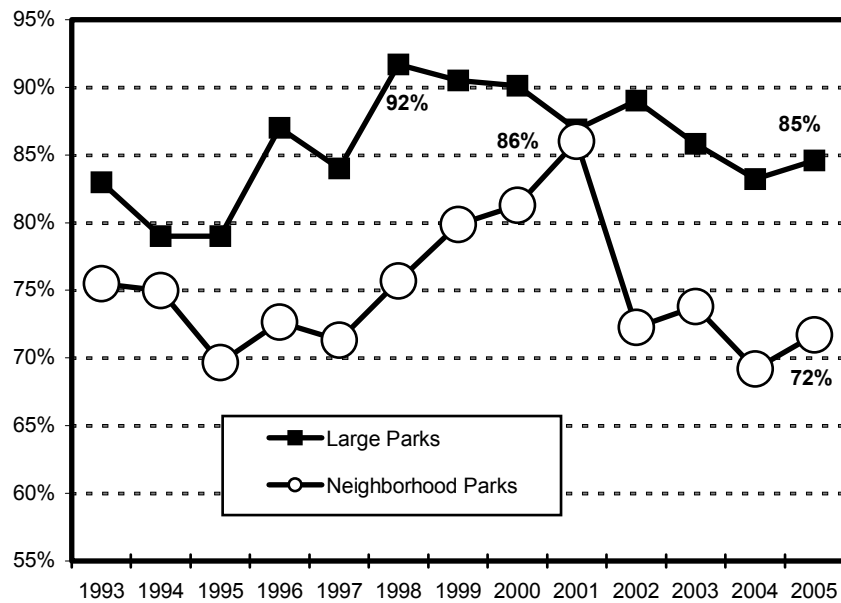
**Figure 7-4: Citizens' Perceptions of Botanic Garden and Liberty Bowl**



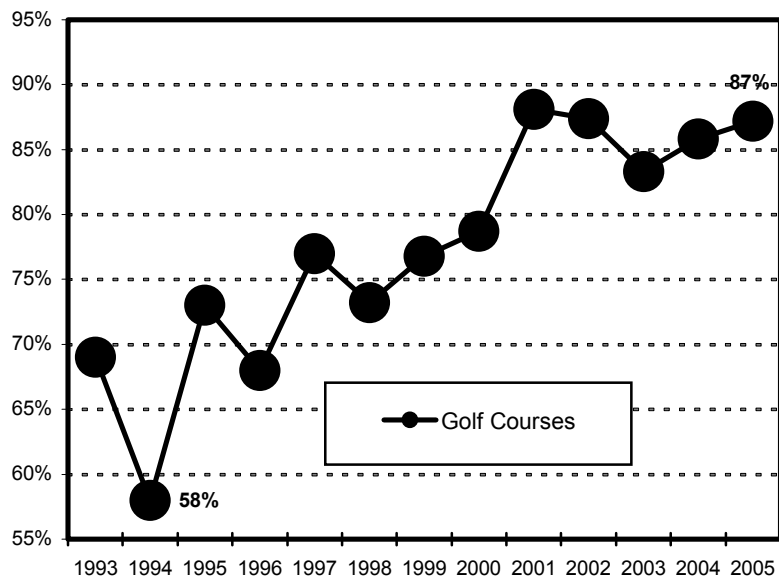
The Memphis Poll next examined the “parks” component of the Division of Park Services. Specifically, it asked citizens about both the large parks and the neighborhood parks. Both of these types of parks have been studied for the entire thirteen years of the Memphis Poll.

The trend lines in Figure 7-5 shows similar patterns for both large and neighborhood parks, although large parks have a more positive rating. The services showed a significant improvement from about 1995 to about 2000. Large parks had very impressive ratings in 1998 with a score of 92 percent, which placed it in the elite level of City services. Both large parks and neighborhood parks declined in their ratings over the next several years. Results for 2005 suggest that the decline may have stabilized. This finding is tentative and will require further data from the 2006 Memphis Poll.

**Figure 7-5: Citizens' Perceptions of Large Parks and Neighborhood Parks**



**Figure 7-6: Citizens' Perceptions of Golf Courses**

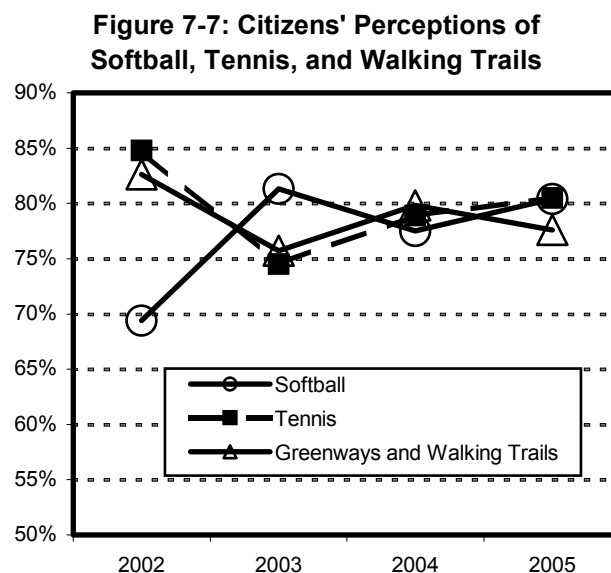


Concerns have been expressed about the lower ratings of the neighborhood parks, since they are part of the core mission of the Division of Park Services. Staff in the program attributed the problem to the lower priority of the parks in City funding which resulted in less maintenance.



The Memphis Poll next examined citizens' perceptions of the quality of the City golf courses. In contrast to the parks, the improvement for golf courses has been impressive. Figure 7-6 shows that the low point for citizens' perception of the golf course was 58 percent in 1994. The ratings increased to 87 percent in 2005. The ratings for golf were higher than the 79 percent score for overall City services.

Next, the Poll examined citizens' perceptions of softball, tennis, and greenways/walking trails. Figure 7-7 shows that all three services were near 79 percent, which is the average for overall City services. Ratings for softball have shown some improvement over the past three years; however, tennis has shown some decline during this time period. Ratings for greenways and walking trails have declined slightly since 2002, but were stable between 2003 and 2005.



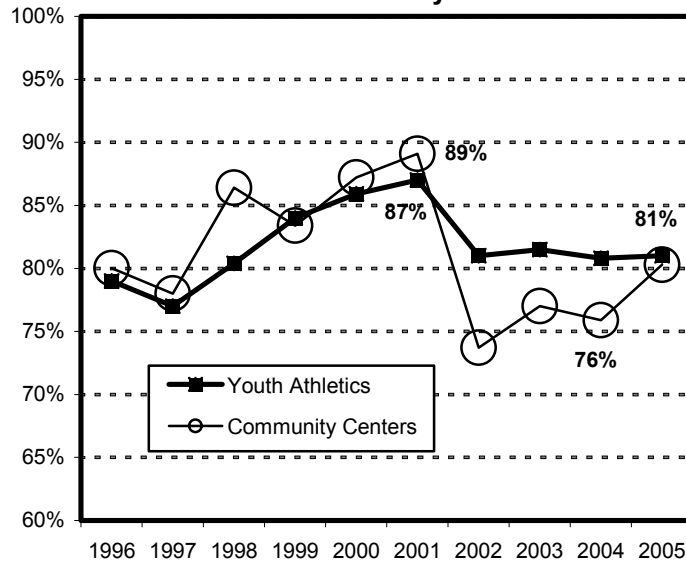
## Services for Children

The Memphis Poll next examined services that were targeted toward s children, but in some cases also provided programs for adults and seniors. The trends declined in 2002 followed by stabilized ratings at the lower level for several years. The ratings still placed many of the services for children at or above the average for all City services.

Figure 7-8 provides information for youth athletics and community centers. The trends for these two services are very similar. The services showed overall improvement from 1997 to 2001. Then in 2002 there was a precipitous drop in citizens' satisfaction. Youth athletics remained stable from 2002 through 2005,

but at the lower level. Community centers were stable at a lower level from 2002 through 2004 and increased to 81 percent in 2005. It appears that the overall pattern for these two services stabilized at about 81 percent, although data are needed from the 2006 Poll to confirm the assessment.

**Figure 7-8: Citizens' Perceptions of Youth Athletics and Community Centers**



Summer day camps have a slightly different pattern, but the overall results are the same. Figure 7-9 shows that for six years (1995, 1996, and 1998-2001) the citizens' ratings for summer day camps were above 85 percent.

**Figure 7-9: Citizens' Perceptions of Park Division Summer Day Camps**

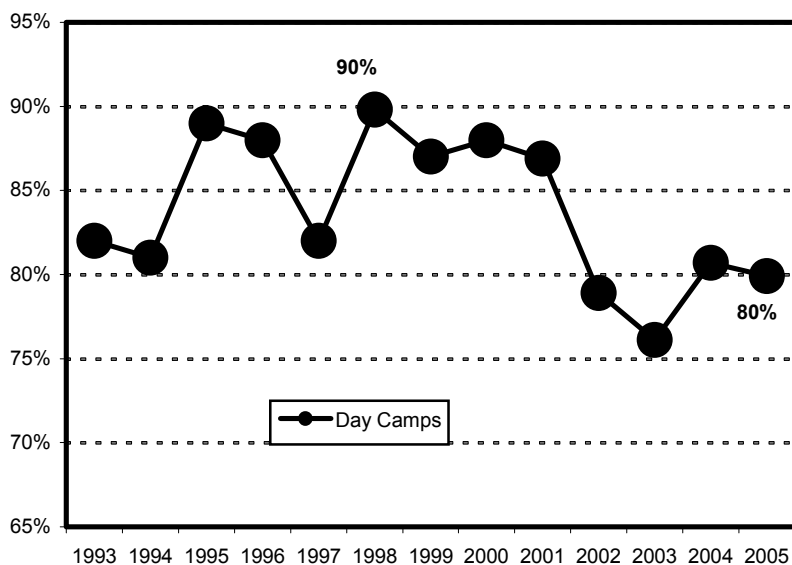
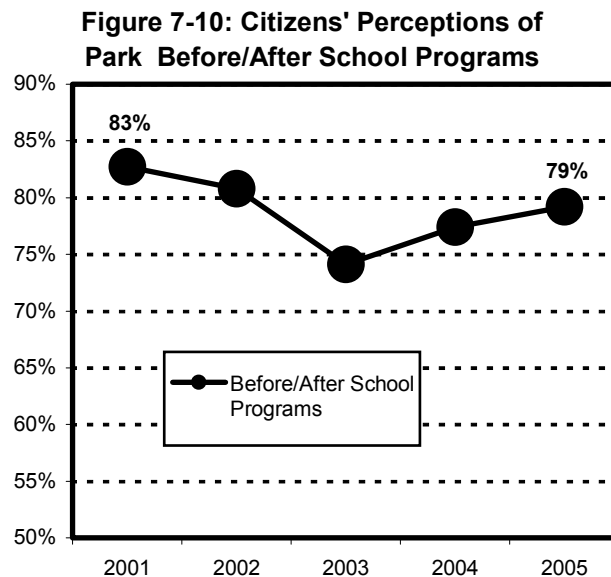


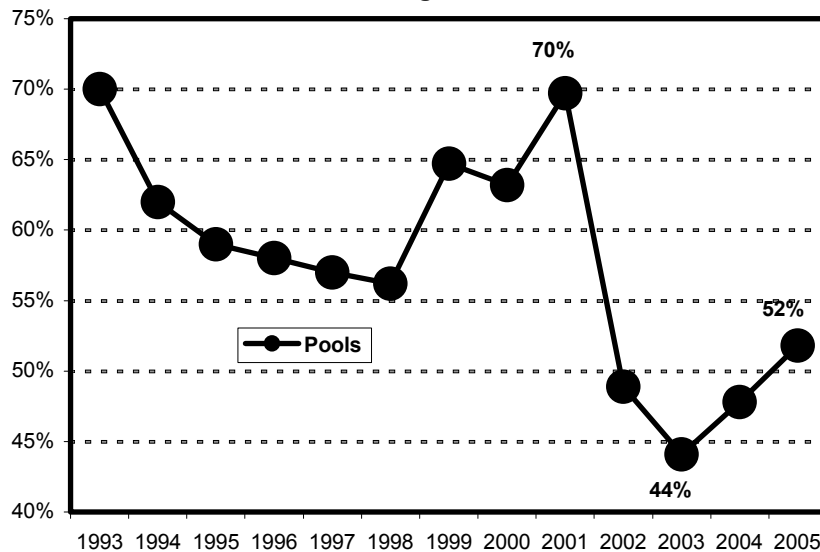
Figure 7-9 shows that there were three earlier years (1993, 1994, and 1997) where the ratings for summer day camps were at about 80 percent. However, in 2002 and 2003 the ratings took a sharp drop and then they increased slightly to 81 percent in 2004. It also appears that these ratings are stabilizing at 81 percent. Although the ratings for summer day camps are very erratic, the overall score of 81 percent places the service slightly above the average for overall City services.

The Memphis Poll examined four years of information about before and after school programs. Figure 7-10 shows a decline in ratings from 2001 to 2003 and then a slight improvement in 2005. It is difficult to analyze this service because of the limited data, but it appears that the ratings may have stabilized at 79 percent, which matches the overall City services' ratings of 79 percent.



The findings about public swimming pools (called Aquatic Centers by the Division of Park Services) were the most problematic. Figure 7-11 indicates that the data from 1993 to 1998 showed a consistent and long-term decline in Citizens' ratings. The ratings in 1993 were 70 percent, but they declined to 56 percent by 1998. Next, a three-year period from 1998 to 2001 showed an overall improvement from 56 percent to 70 percent. In contrast, the period from 2001 to 2003 showed a precipitous decline in citizens' satisfaction with the swimming pools from 70 percent to 44 percent.

**Figure 7-11: Citizens' Perceptions of Public Swimming Pools**



The 52 percent ratings for public swimming pools in the 2005 Memphis Poll were an improvement over the last two years of the Memphis Poll. Despite this change, public swimming pools are among the lowest rated of any City services. An earlier Memphis Poll suggested that the problems related to maintenance of the pools and lack of courtesy of the personnel. These are issues that could easily be verified by officials in the Parks Division.

Staff suggested the problem was budgetary in not having funds to hire reliable temporary staff for the pools, which are open only a short period of time.

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ The overall ratings for the Park Services Division stabilized over the last three years after a steep decline in 2002.
- ❑ There was some variation in services. Golf courses showed an impressive long-term improvement in citizens' ratings, while programs for children showed slight improvements.
- ❑ The citizens rated public swimming pools as the second lowest service in the entire Memphis Poll.
- ❑ Ratings for neighborhood parks are the second lowest among programs in the Division of Park Services.
- ❑ Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium showed some decline in ratings, but was still near the average for overall City services.
- ❑ The Zoo, Pink Palace Museum, and the Botanic Garden continue to be highly rated and are among the elite City services.

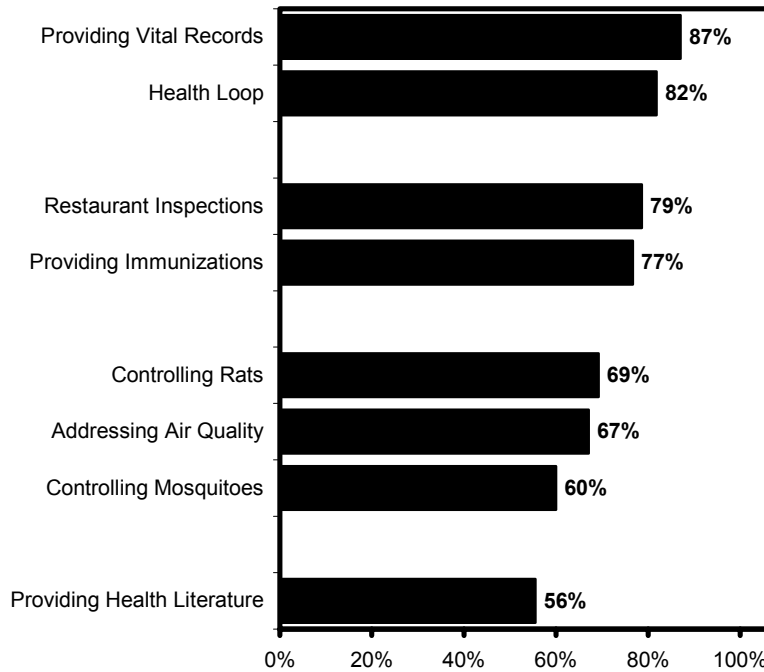
## Chapter 8

### Joint Agencies

#### Memphis & Shelby County Health Department, Public Libraries, Riverfront Development Corporation, and Memphis, Light, Gas and Water

This chapter discusses the citizens' perceptions of joint agencies. Administration and/or funding of these agencies are shared with other entities. This section discusses the Memphis & Shelby County Health Department, the Public Libraries, the Riverfront Development Corporation, and Memphis Light, Gas and Water.

**Figure 8-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Health Department and Health Loop Clinics**



#### Health Department

The Memphis and Shelby County Health Department (called Health Department in this report) is a joint City and County agency that is administered by the County. The City provides approximately half of the funding for the Health Department. The Health Department has an extensive mandate that includes providing environmental protection to the community, improving sanitation

practices, and delivering health related services. In addition, the Health Loop Clinics were formerly administered by the Health Department, but have now been moved to the MED, which is the Shelby County public hospital. The Memphis Poll continues to ask about the Health Loop Clinics because they are very important to the citizens.

Figure 8-1 provides the results for the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department and the Health Loop Clinics. The first tier of services included providing vital records (such as birth and death certificates) and the Health Loop clinics. Eighty seven (87) percent of the citizens felt the Health Department was doing a good job in providing vital records and 82 percent thought the MED was doing a good job in administering the Health Loop clinics. These ratings place both of these services above the 79 percent average for overall City services.

The second tier services in Figure 8-1 clustered near 79 percent, the score for overall City services. The ratings were 79 percent for restaurant inspections and 77 percent for providing immunizations. These services are effective and compare favorably with many services delivered directly by the City of Memphis.

Figure 8-1 displays the third tier of services that are below average when compared to overall City services. Sixty-nine (69) percent of the citizens were satisfied with controlling rats, 67 percent were satisfied with addressing air quality and 60 percent were satisfied with controlling mosquitoes.

The lowest tier of Health Department services was far below average and included a single service--providing health education and disease prevention literature (56 percent). African Americans were less satisfied than whites with health education/disease prevention literature and immunizations.

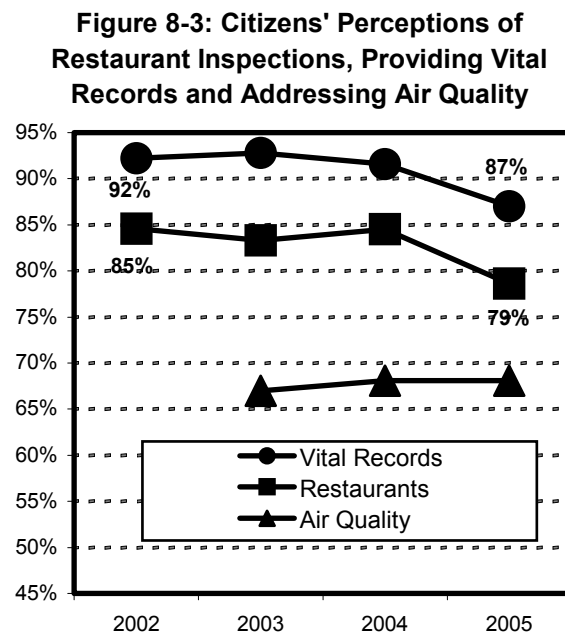
## **Trend Data**

Trend data examined the last three to four years during which these questions were asked. Figure 8-2 shows the citizens' perceptions of controlling rats within the City have declined 15 percent since the Memphis Poll first started reporting on this service. There were deep budgetary cuts in the service and citizens recognized the declining quality of the service. The decreased quality of this service has been large and it has incrementally changed in the years in which this important service has been examined.

The Health Department is also responsible for controlling mosquitoes. The Health Department feels that it has one of the nation's best programs, but the job of controlling mosquitoes is difficult given environmental and health conditions in Memphis. Figure 8-2 shows citizens' perceptions of the Health Department's efforts to control mosquitoes. Overall, the rating for controlling mosquitoes has shown an improvement over the four years of the Memphis Poll during which this information has been collected. In 2002, 51 percent of the citizens were satisfied with controlling mosquitoes and by 2005 that results had increased to 60 percent.

Next, the Memphis Poll examined citizens' perceptions of providing vital records and restaurant inspections. Figure 8-3 shows that both of these services had a similar pattern of stable rankings from 2002 to 2004 and a small drop in ratings for 2005. However, both of these services are at or above the average for overall City services.

Figure 8-3 also describes the citizens' perceptions of addressing air quality, another responsibility of the Health Department. The results for air quality are similar for all three years of the Memphis Poll during which the question has been asked. However, the trend scores are considerably below the average scores for overall City services, which is 79 percent.

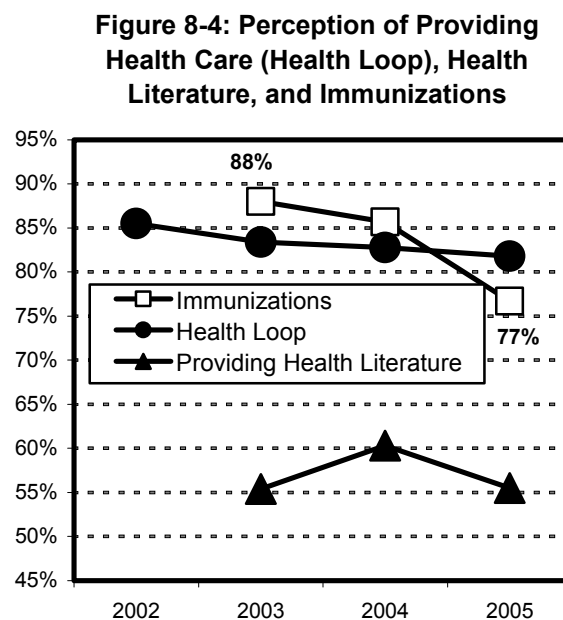


The Health Department also provides immunizations and immunization records. Figure 8-4 provides trend information on the three years in which the Memphis



Poll has examined this service. The citizens felt that immunizations were not as effectively delivered as in previous years. In 2003, 88 percent of the citizens were satisfied with immunizations, but by 2005 that had dropped to 77 percent. This sharp drop may be due to the flu vaccine shortage this year, which was outside of the City's control. The results for 2005 place immunizations slightly below the average for overall City services.

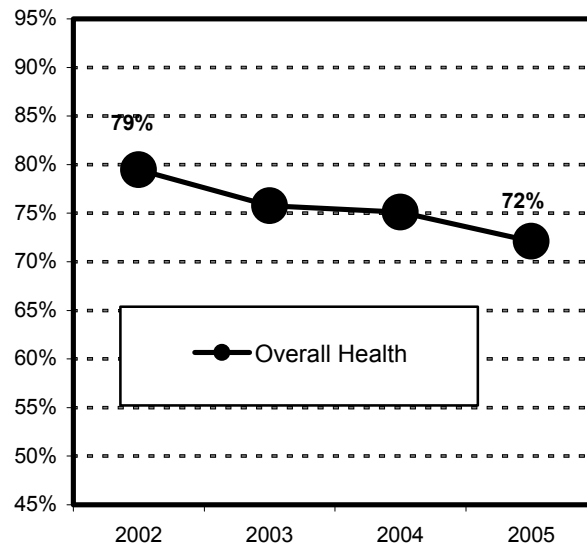
The Health Department also provides health education and disease prevention literature. Figure 8-4 shows stable ratings over the three years in which the information was collected, albeit at a rate well below the average for overall City services.



The administration of Health Loop Clinics recently moved from the Health Department to the MED. The Poll question asked citizens to rate their satisfaction with the quality of health care at the Health Loop clinics. Figure 8-4 shows the ratings have declined incrementally over the four years for which the Memphis Poll has been collecting this information. However, the decline is very small and the clinics remain above the average for overall City services.

Finally, Figure 8-5 shows the average scores for all of the combined health services. These services included both the Health Department services and the Health Loop Clinics. The results confirm the findings of the individual trend lines that overall, the services of the Health Department seem to be incrementally declining for each year since 2002.

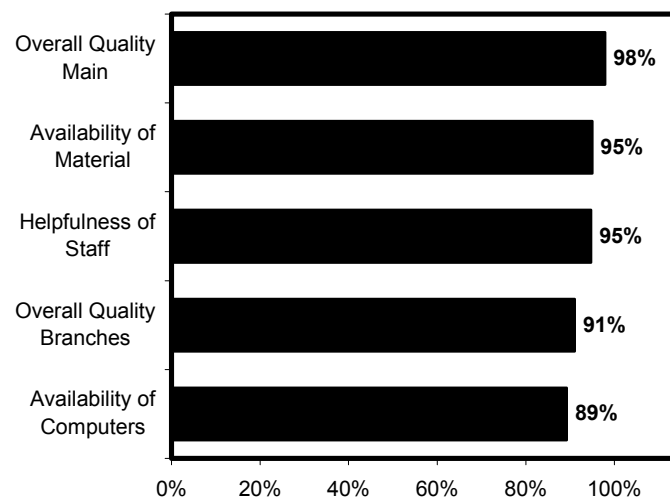
**Figure 8-5: Overall Citizens' Perceptions of Health Programs**



## Public Libraries

Public Libraries are an important component of the City's public services. The public libraries include the central library, branches, and several outreach activities. For simplicity, the terminology "Public Libraries" is used for the Memphis Public Library & Information Center. Starting in 2005, it is managed by the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods and seven member board.

**Figure 8-6: Citizens' Perceptions of Public Libraries**



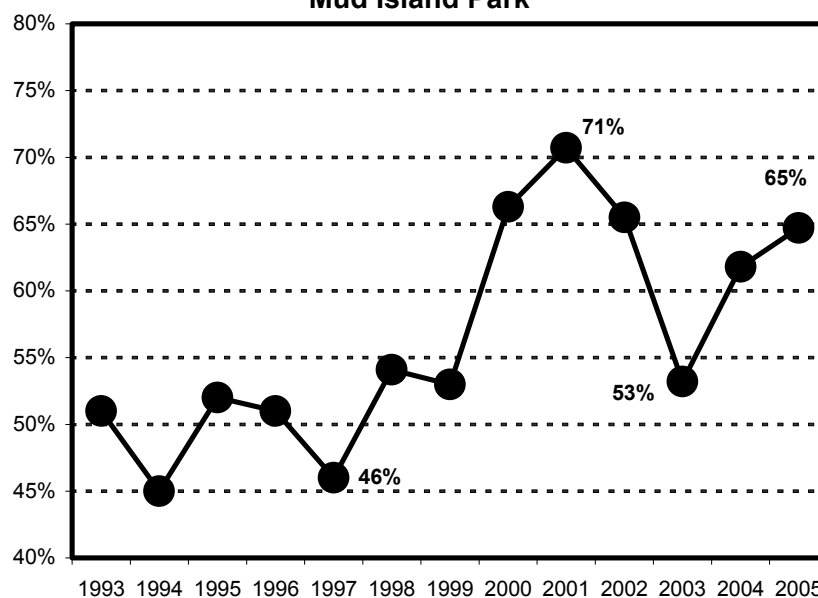
The public library system has been consistently rated among the very highest services provided by the City of Memphis. Figure 8-6 shows the rankings for the overall quality of the main library (98 percent), the availability of materials (95 percent), the helpfulness of the staff (95 percent), overall quality of branches (91 percent), and availability of computers (89 percent). The average score for all of the services was 94 percent. These ratings place the Public Libraries among the elite of City services. The results for 2003, the last year in which the libraries were studied, were very similar to these results.

## Riverfront Development Corporation

The Riverfront Development Corporation, also a joint agency, operates Mud Island River Park. It is a nonprofit agency charged with maintaining and developing the riverfront. It receives considerable funding from the City of Memphis.

The Memphis Park Services' administration of Mud Island River Park was reflected in Memphis Polls from 1993 to 2001. Figure 8-7 shows that from 1993 to 1999 its ratings were very low with scores of 55 percent or lower. However, Mud Island River Park had improvements in ratings from 1999 to 2001. The citizens' satisfaction with the park reached a high of 71 percent in 2001.

**Figure 8-7: Citizens' Perceptions of Mud Island Park**



The Riverfront Development Corporation's administration of Mud Island Park began after the 2001 Memphis Poll. The Poll asked citizens if the corporation

was doing a good job of administering the park after that time. The ratings from 2001 to 2003 showed a sharp decline from 71 percent to 53 percent during this early period of Riverfront Development Corporation administration of the park.

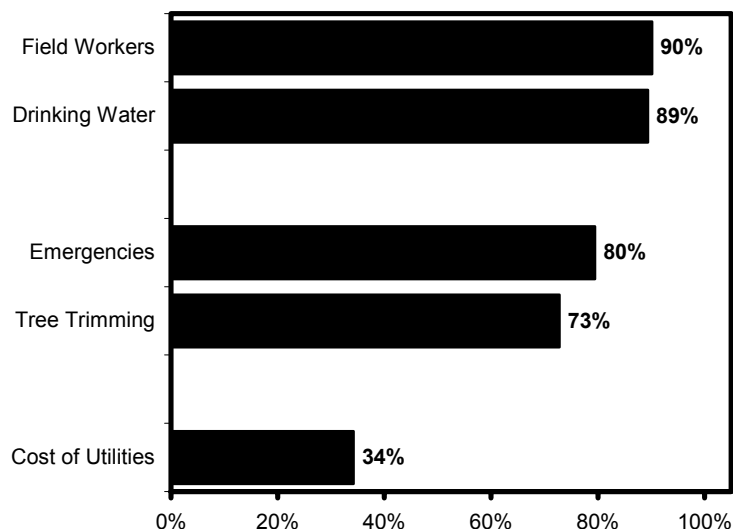
More recent Polls showed that citizens were more impressed with the park. In the 2005 Poll, 65 percent of the citizens thought the Riverfront Development Corporation was doing a good job. This was a 12 percent increase in satisfaction from the 2003 Memphis Poll.

## Memphis Light, Gas and Water

Memphis Light, Gas and Water is considered a City of Memphis Division, even though it has an independent board. Mayor W.W. Herenton has made recent efforts to incorporate the division into the City's administrative structure. The 2003 Memphis Poll included questions about MLGW for the first time, which were included for the second time in the current Poll.

Figure 8-8 shows the results of the 2005 Memphis Poll, which asked about MLGW services. Two service measures were rated very highly: the courtesy of field workers in the citizens' neighborhood (90 percent) and the quality of drinking water (89) percent. Both rank well above the City's overall average for services.

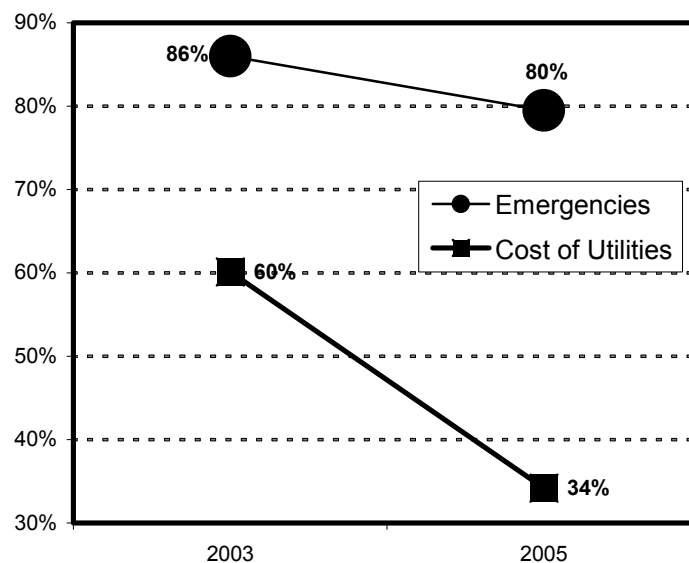
**Figure 8-8: Citizens's Perceptions of Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW)**



The 2004 Memphis Poll only asked questions about the performance of MLGW in electrical restoration after the devastating windstorm. Only 68 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the performance of MLGW in electrical restoration and that rating was 18 percent lower than the previous years' Poll that asked about MLGW's role in dealing with emergencies. Figure 8-8 shows that in 2005, 80 percent of the citizens felt MLGW was doing a good job of responding to gas and electric emergencies in their neighborhoods. Figure 8-9 shows that the ratings were slightly lower than before the storm, but this is considered a positive finding given the extensive dissatisfaction after the storm.

The ratings were not nearly as high for tree trimming around power lines. Seventy-three (73) percent of the citizens thought the City was doing a good job with their tree trimming service. This finding was about the same as in 2003.

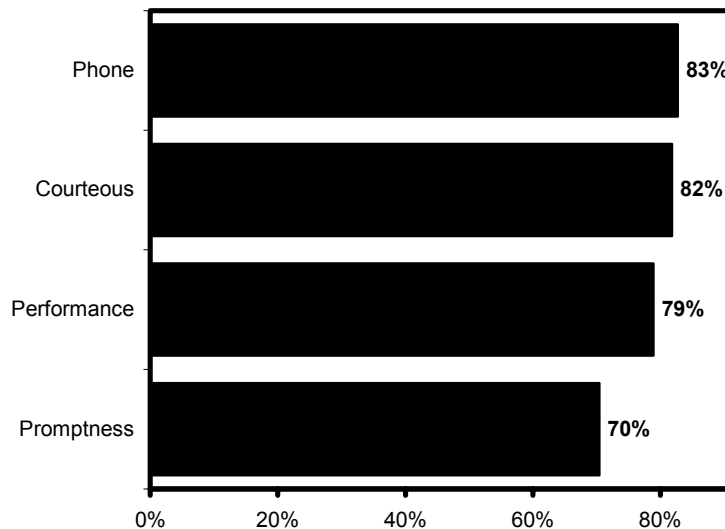
**Figure 8-9: Citizens' Perceptions of MLGW's Performance in Responding to Emergencies and Cost of Utilities**



In sharp contrast, citizens showed a lack of confidence in MLGW's performance in the cost of utilities. Figure 8-8 shows that only 34 percent were satisfied with this service. The result places the cost of utilities as the lowest rated service in the 2005 Memphis Poll and one of the very lowest scores received by any service in the history of the Memphis Poll. Figure 8-9 provides trend information about the cost of utilities. In 2003, 60 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the cost of utilities, but that result plunged to 34 percent in 2005. In addition, there were substantial racial differences in the ratings. African Americans were 25 percent less satisfied than whites with the cost of utilities.

The Memphis Poll also asked if citizens had contacted MLGW. A substantial percentage of citizens, 44 percent, contacted MLGW, which made it the City division most contacted by citizens. Figure 8-10 shows the quality of that contacting experience from the citizens' perspective. The citizens' ratings were: 83 percent for phone professionalism, 82 percent for courtesy, 79 percent for performance by solving the problem, and 70 percent for promptness.

**Figure 8-10: Citizens' Perceptions of Contacting Memphis Light, Gas and Water**



The Memphis Poll next wanted to know how these ratings compared to other services that involved citizens' contacting City Hall, as shown in Figure 8-11.

**Figure 8-11: Contacting MLGW Compared to City—Function Computation**

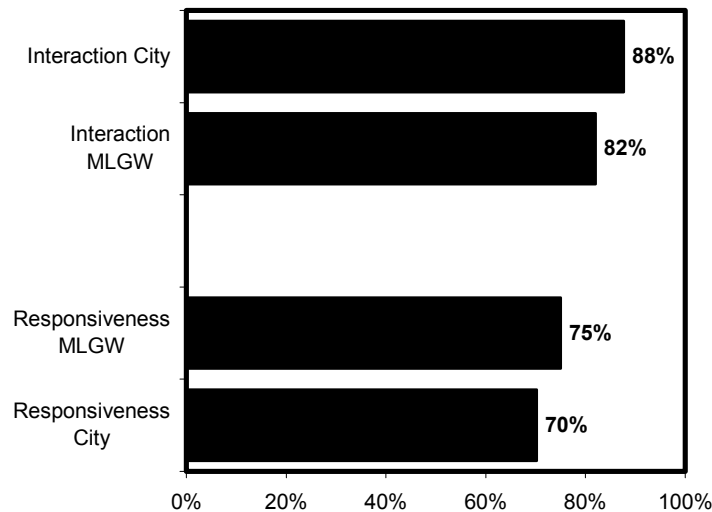


Figure 8-11 compares citizens' experience contacting MLGW to that of contacting the City using two measures—interaction and responsiveness. Interaction is defined as the average of phone professionalism and courteousness, while responsiveness is the average of performance and promptness. It shows that the City ratings were higher for interaction—88 percent compared to 82 percent for MLGW. In contrast, MLGW received higher ratings for responsiveness—75 percent compared to 70 percent for other City agencies. The mixed findings suggest that the responses to contacting were about the same—whether the service was provided by MLGW or a conventional City agency.

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ Health Department services saw a small but perceptible decline in the ratings for a number of services.
- ❑ The Library continues to be one of the highest rated agencies in the Memphis Poll.
- ❑ One of the “stunning” findings in the 2005 Memphis Poll was the exceptionally low rating for citizens' satisfaction with the cost of utilities provided by MLGW.

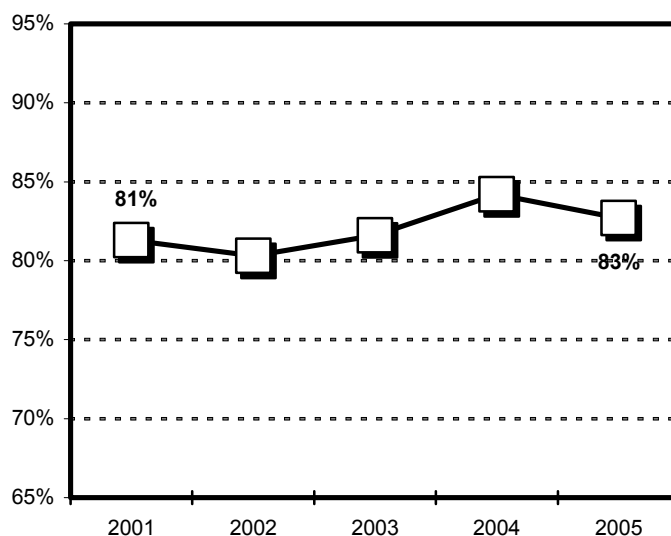
## Chapter 9

# Neighborhood Concerns

This chapter examines citizens' perceptions of their neighborhoods and specific concerns related to the physical conditions within their neighborhoods.

The next several chapters provide information to carry out the priority the Herenton Administration places on improving the City's neighborhoods. In his inauguration address for his third term, Mayor Willie W. Herenton promised to rebuild Memphis neighborhoods. He called for a citywide renaissance to create strong neighborhoods saying, "strong neighborhoods make for a strong city." On New Year's Day 2004, Mayor Herenton talked about a rebirth of the City's neighborhoods, saying "I believe a city is comprised of bright, vibrant neighborhoods."<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 9-1: Optimism about Overall Neighborhood Quality**



The citizens of Memphis were equally optimistic about the overall quality of their own neighborhoods. Figure 9-1 shows that 83 percent of Memphians thought their neighborhoods would be the same or better in one year. The responses to this question have been fairly consistent over all five years of the Memphis Poll in which the question was asked.

---

<sup>15</sup> Bill Dries, "Herenton promises to rebuild neighborhoods," [The Commercial Appeal](#), January 2, 2000 and Jacinthia Jones, "Mayor lists successes, challenges for city," [The Commercial Appeal](#), January 1, 2004.



The Memphis Poll was able to map<sup>16</sup> citizens' optimism about neighborhoods by examining geographic sections of the City. Figure 9-2 shows that the most optimistic areas of the City were Downtown, Southwest, Midtown, Southside, and Eastside. The moderately optimistic areas were Northside, Fareast and Southcentral. The citizens were least optimistic in Northwest, Northeast and Southeast.

**Figure 9-2: Optimism About Overall Neighborhood Quality in 2005 By Sections of the City**



## An Overview of Neighborhood Physical Problems

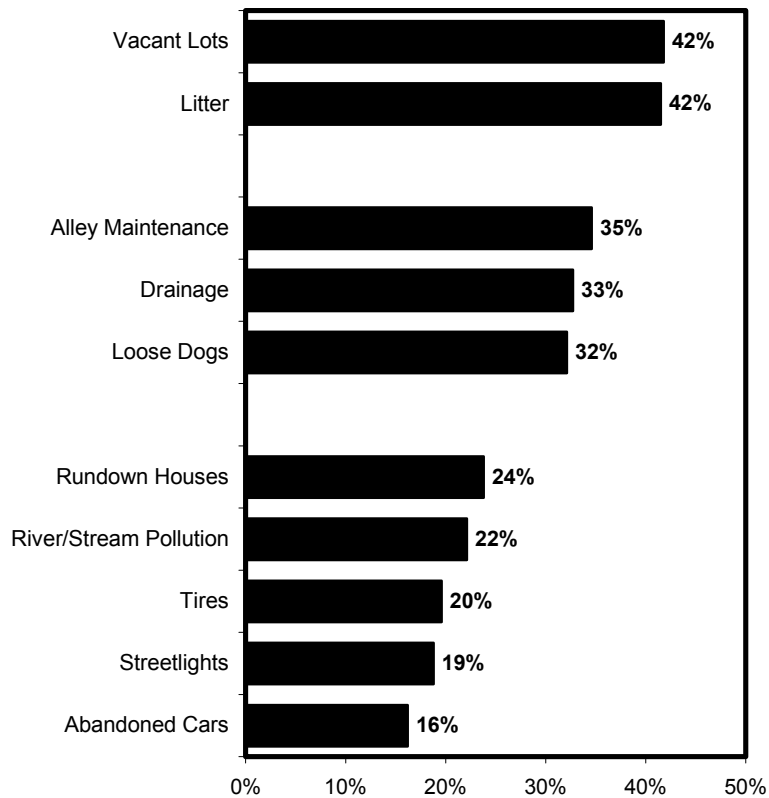
This section examines physical problems in the citizens' neighborhoods. Physical problems included litter on streets, dogs running loose, drainage after rain storms, maintenance of city alleys, inadequate street lights, trash or weeds on vacant lots, rundown houses, pollution in rivers and creeks, abandoned cars and trucks, and tires left on the street for more than two weeks. The citizens were asked by the Memphis Poll to indicate whether these issues were problems in their neighborhoods.

Figure 9-3 shows the levels of citizens' concerns about specific physical conditions in their neighborhoods. Trash and litter on vacant lots (42 percent) and litter on neighborhood streets (42 percent) were the greatest concerns of the citizens. These results suggest that these two physical conditions were widespread concerns for the citizens.

The next tier of concerns about physical conditions ranged from 32 to 35 percent. The concerns in this tier included maintenance of City alleys, drainage after rainstorms, and dogs running loose.

<sup>16</sup> This is display map does not reflect the actual eastern boundaries of the City,

**Figure 9-3: Citizens' Perceptions of Physical Conditions as Neighborhood Problems**

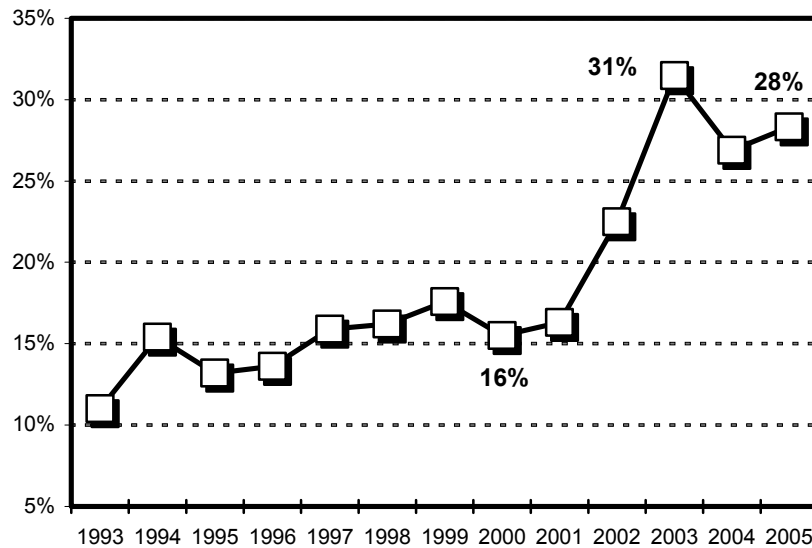


The lowest levels of concerns ranged from 16 percent to 24 percent and included rundown houses, river/stream pollution, tires left on streets for more than two weeks, streetlights, and abandoned cars.

### **Trend Data**

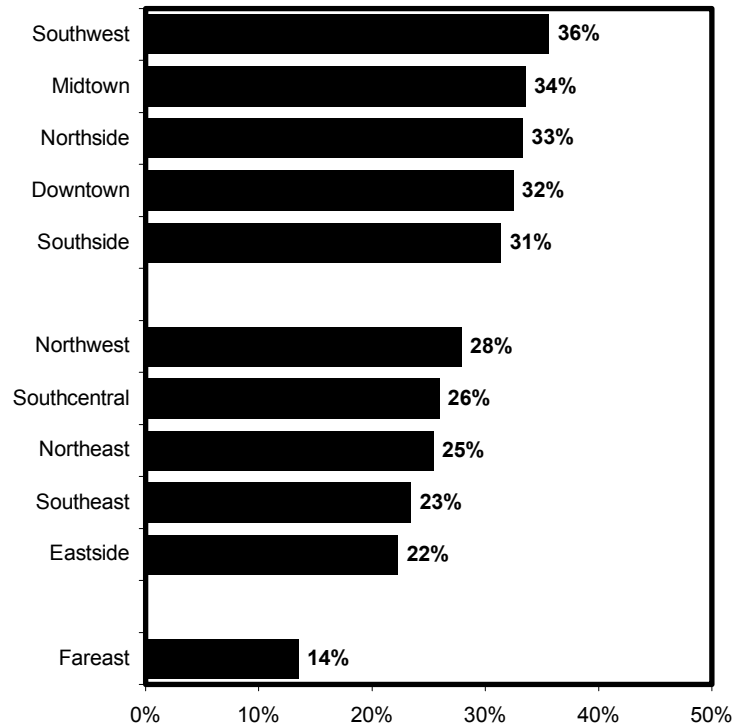
Figure 9-4 shows the average score for citizens' concerns about physical conditions for each year of the Memphis Poll. Physical conditions were not widespread concerns until 2001, hovering around 15 percent. However, the level of concerns drastically increased between 2001 and 2003. Figure 9-4 shows that overall concerns have sustained this higher level for the last two years.

**Figure 9-4: Overall Trend About Concerns with Neighborhood Physical Problems**



The Memphis Poll also examined concerns about physical conditions by sections of the City in Figure 9-5.

**Figure 9-5: Average Score for Concerns About Physical Conditions by Area of the City**

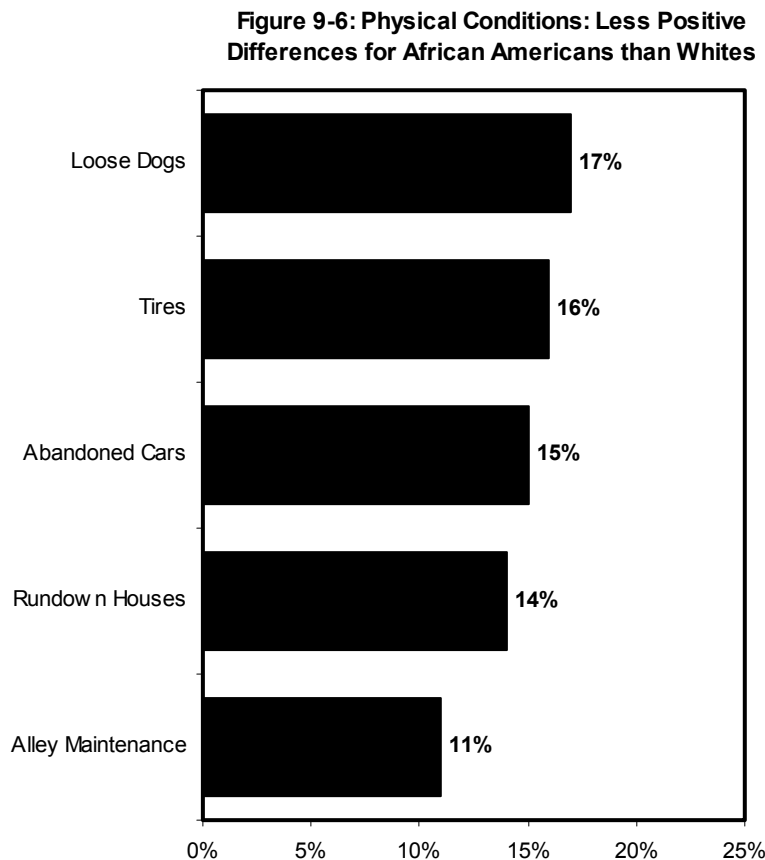


Five areas of the City were the most concerned about physical conditions, with scores ranging from 31 to 36 percent. These areas included Southwest, Midtown, Northside, Downtown, and Southside.

Moderate levels of concerns ranged from 22 percent to 28 percent. The areas with moderate levels of concerns were Northwest, Southcentral, Northeast, Southeast, and Eastside. The lowest levels of concerns were found in the Fareast at 14 percent.

## Race and Physical Conditions

The Memphis Poll asked ten questions about physical conditions in the citizens' neighborhoods. Six of those questions met the ten percent threshold of indicating African Americans were more concerned about physical conditions than whites. The conditions which met this criterion are described in Figure 9-6 and include loose dogs, tires left on the street for more than two weeks, abandoned cars, rundown houses, and alley maintenance



Five of the conditions did not meet the ten percent threshold to demonstrate differences between African Americans and whites. Those conditions were vacant lots, litter on neighborhood streets, drainage after rains, inadequate streetlights, and pollution in rivers and creeks.

The results in this chapter show that citizens are very concerned about the physical conditions in their neighborhoods. The next chapters will examine citizens' perception of the agencies that deal with these issues.

### **Key Findings about Neighborhood Physical Conditions**

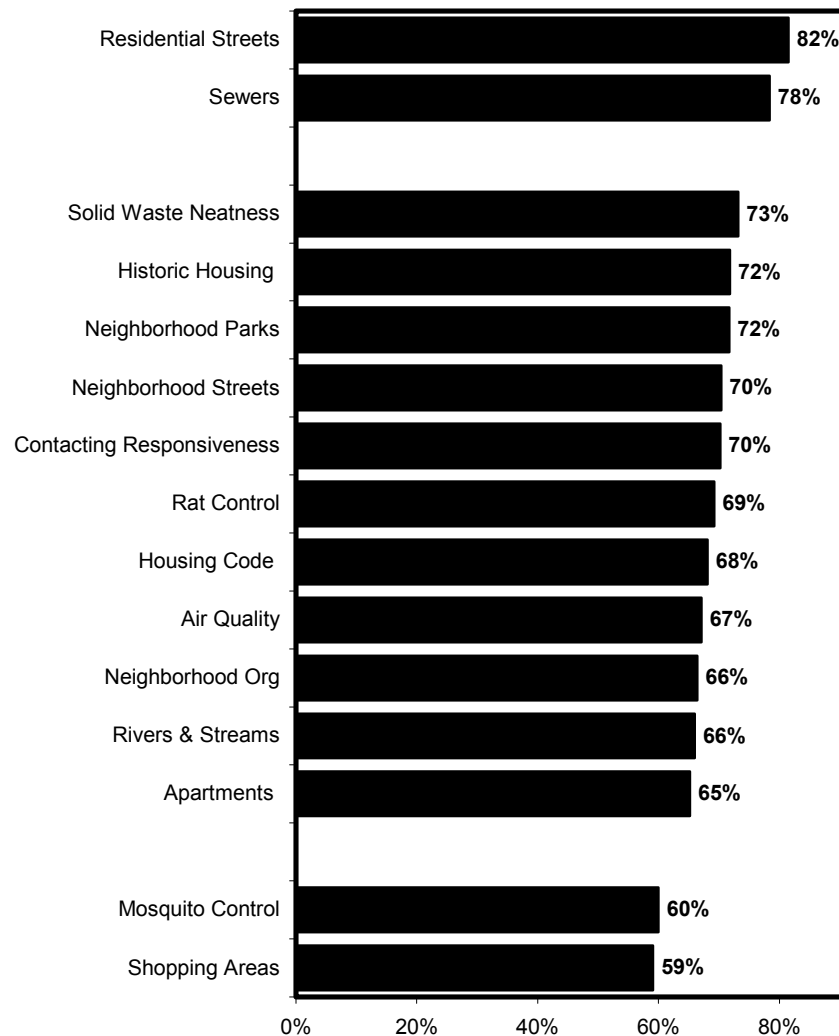
- ❑ Memphians had positive perceptions of their neighborhoods and they felt that their neighborhoods would be about the same or a better place to live in one year.
- ❑ However, citizens continued to be concerned about the physical conditions within their neighborhoods.
- ❑ Citizens were most concerned about vacant lots and litter on streets.

# Chapter 10

## City Divisions and Neighborhood Physical Conditions

This chapter examines the services that are related to the physical conditions discussed in Chapter 9. It also examines the divisions of City government that have specific components addressing the physical conditions. There may be some redundancy in this chapter since discussions of problems overlap several of the divisions.

**Figure 10-1: Neighborhood Services  
Related to Physical Conditions**



## **Overall Assessment**

Chapter 9 suggested that citizens were concerned about the physical conditions in their neighborhoods. This chapter examines citizens' perceptions of the programs and services that deal with these physical problems. Figure 10-1 provides a list of services that address neighborhood physical conditions, which cut across many divisions of City government. Overall, the citizens felt that services that address the physical conditions of neighborhoods were less effective than many other City services.

Seventy-nine (79) percent of the citizens were satisfied with overall City services. Yet, Figure 10-1 shows that only one service related to neighborhoods and physical conditions is above this value and fourteen services are below this score. In addition, ten of the seventeen services are at or below a 70 percent rating.

Next, this chapter examines a variety of services that are related to specific divisions of City government. The agencies include Public Services and Neighborhoods, Mayor's Citizen Service Center, Housing and Community Development, General Services, and the Office of Planning and Development. Chapters 11 and 12 also provide additional information about other services, which have a neighborhood component.

## **Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods**

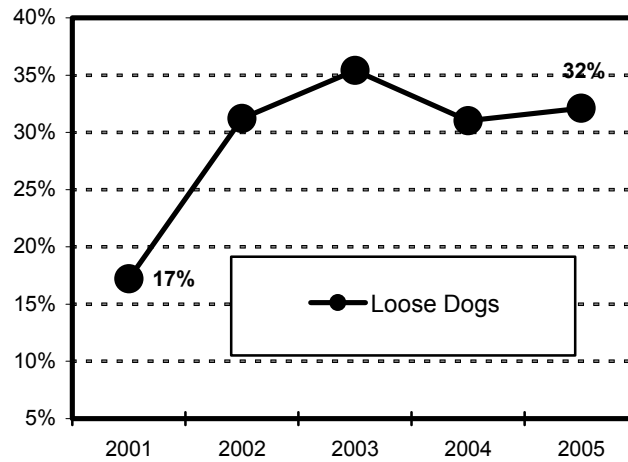
The Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods is one of the City's lead agencies dealing with neighborhoods. The division identifies its job as addressing "issues crucial to the City's focus on neighborhood stability and effective community action with citizens." This division serves 300 neighborhoods in the City of Memphis.<sup>17</sup> The division administers the Animal Shelter that addresses loose dogs in neighborhoods and it administers the Center for Neighborhoods.

Figure 10-2 provides information about a physical problem that is the responsibility of the Division of Public Services. Thirty-one (31) percent of the citizens were concerned about loose dogs. This result was a 15 percent increase in concerns compared to the 2001 Memphis Poll. However, the concerns about loose dogs have stabilized in a range just above 30 percent.

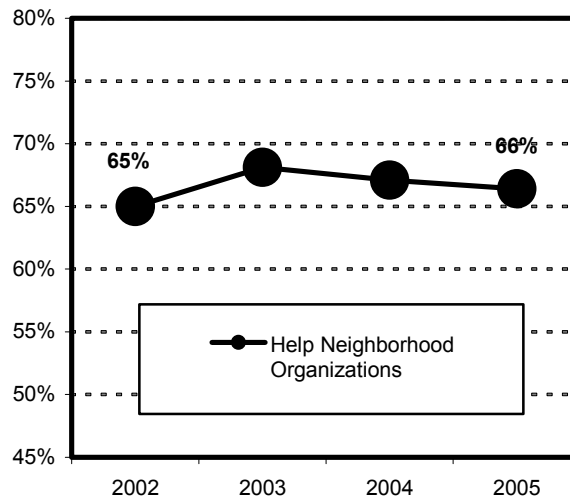
---

<sup>17</sup> Delivering Services, Measuring Progress, City of Memphis, fiscal year 2002 Operating Budget Book, p. GFE 167.

**Figure 10-2: Concerns About Physical Conditions—Responsibilities of Public Services**



**Figure 10-3: Citizens' Perceptions of Helping Neighborhood Organizations**



Part of the division's mission is to work with neighborhood organizations. The Memphis Poll asked citizens how well the City performed in helping neighborhood organizations. Helping neighborhood organizations is the mission of the Center for Neighborhoods, located in this division. The citizens rated the division's services as far below average. Sixty-seven (67) percent of the citizens were satisfied with City efforts at helping neighborhood organizations. Not only are these ratings mediocre, but they have not shown significant improvement over the four years of the Memphis Poll in which they have been measured.



## Mayor's Citizen Service Center

The Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC) receives complaints from Citizens and forwards those complaints to the appropriate agency. Complaints to the City come both to the MCSC and directly to the agencies. The MCSC was formerly a part of the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods, but it was recently moved to the Executive Office of the City.

The Poll examined the interaction component for the Mayor's Citizen Service Center since its main task is to deal with citizens who call City Hall. Interaction includes phone professionalism and courtesy.

**Figure 10-4: Citizens' Perceptions of Interaction by Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC)**

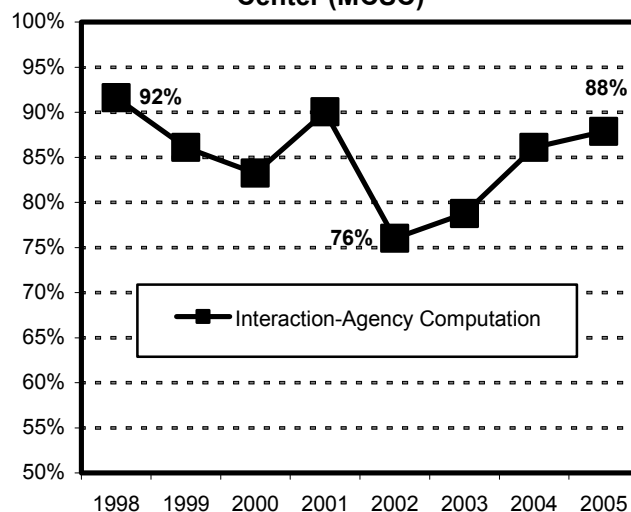


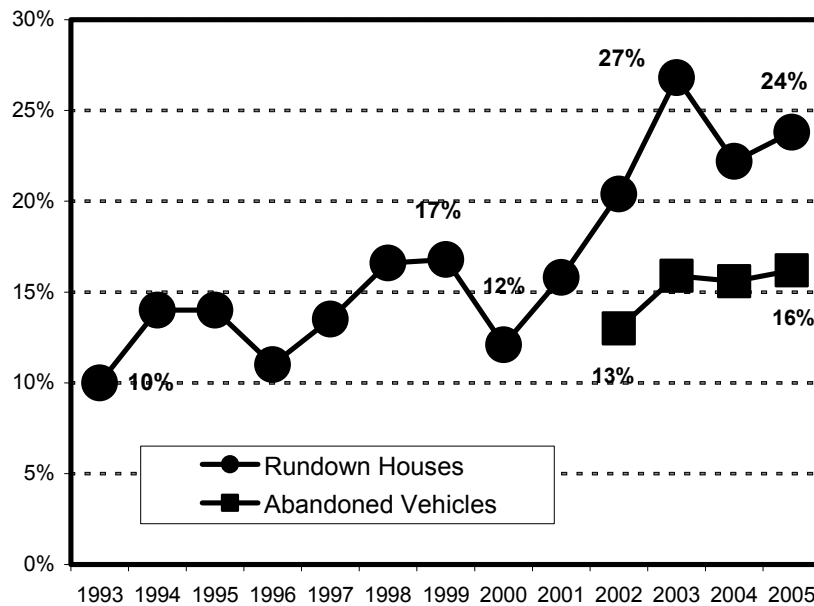
Figure 10-5 shows that there has been some change in citizens' assessment of interaction with the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. The data reflected ratings of at least 90 percent in both 1998 and in 2001. However, the ratings decreased to 76 percent in 2002, a 14 percent drop in citizens' ratings compared to 2001.

However, the Mayor's Citizen Service Center has shown an improvement in its ratings for the last three years of the Memphis Poll and it is now at 88 percent. Chapter 12 provides more information about the Mayor's Citizen Service Center, including comparisons of its ratings to those of other agencies.

## Division of Housing and Community Development

The Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is the lead agency for providing and improving housing in the City's neighborhoods.<sup>18</sup> The division administers code enforcement that deals with dilapidated houses and abandoned vehicles. In addition, the Division of Housing and Community Development also provides support for economic development and thus assists some of the City's shopping areas.

**Figure 10-5: Citizens Concerns About Physical Conditions—Responsibilities of HCD**



This division has responsibility for several issues related to physical conditions of the citizens' neighborhoods. Figure 10-5 shows citizens' concerns about rundown houses in their neighborhoods. Twenty-four (24) percent of citizens expressed concerns about rundown houses, which indicated a moderate level of concern. It is not clear from the trend chart if the concerns about rundown houses have stabilized or if future Polls will show increasing levels of concerns.

The Memphis Poll also asked about abandoned vehicles in the citizens' neighborhoods. Figure 10-2 indicates that only 16 percent of the citizens expressed concerns about abandoned vehicles. Overall, abandoned vehicles do not show increasing levels of citizens' concern. In addition, Chapter 11 will show that citizens were satisfied with the service responding to abandoned vehicles

<sup>18</sup> Although not formally joined, the same director administers both the Division of Housing and Community Development and the Memphis Housing Authority.

and that the work of the City may be reducing citizens' concerns about abandoned vehicles.

The levels of concerns for each of these physical conditions provide the context for understanding the perceptions of the division's services. Figure 10-6 shows the citizens' ratings of services related to the Division of Housing and Community Development. Overall, citizens thought these efforts were mediocre. Seventy-two (72) percent of the citizens thought that the City was doing a good job in preserving historic housing and buildings, 68 percent thought they were doing a good job with maintaining housing codes, 66 percent thought they were doing a good job helping neighborhood organizations, 65 percent thought they were doing a good job improving apartments and public housing, and 59 percent thought they were doing a good job improving shopping areas. All of these services have lower ratings compared to the overall City rating for services of 79 percent.

African Americans gave lower ratings than whites to helping neighborhood organizations.

**Figure 10-6: Neighborhood Services  
Provided by HCD**

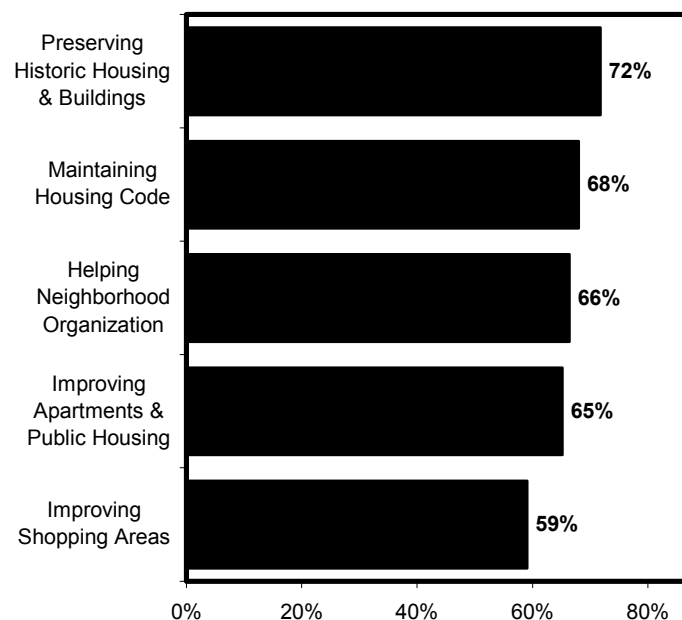


Figure 10-7 provides trend data for the four years of the Memphis Poll in which these services have been examined. The trend lines appear to have a similar pattern for many of the services. Most services were at their highest in 2002, the

first year in which this information was collected. Then, a decline over one to two years appeared. This was followed by an improvement from 2004 to 2005, although most of the services are still below their 2002 levels.

The Division of Housing and Community Development now manages the code enforcement agency of City government. This agency was located in the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods in 2004. Code enforcement responds to citizens' complaints about both abandoned vehicles and rundown houses. The Memphis Poll examined citizens' satisfaction for both the interaction components and the responsiveness of code enforcement. Interaction with citizens refers to the professionalism of the staff in answering the phone and the courtesy and attentiveness of the staff in dealing with the citizens. Responsiveness referred to responding quickly to the citizens' concerns and solving the problems.

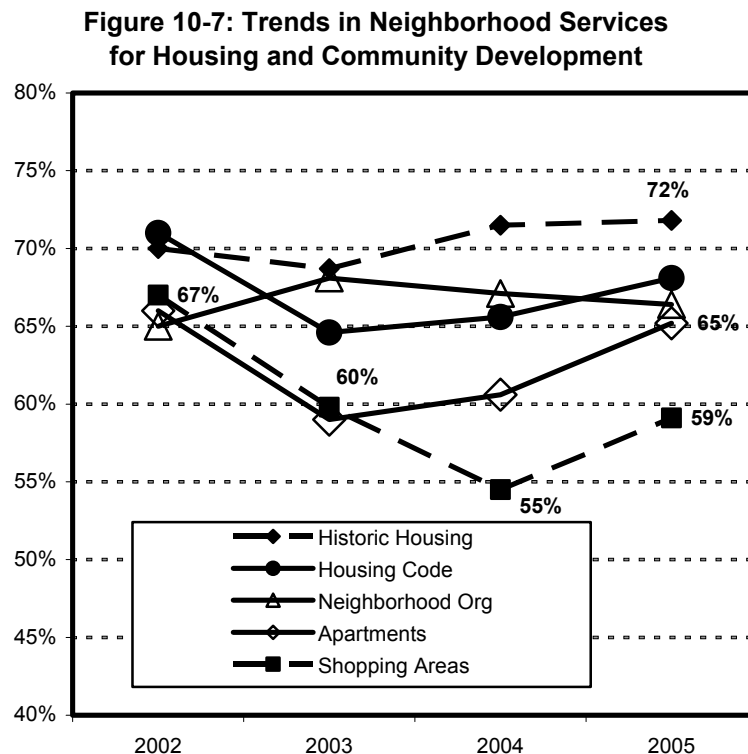


Figure 10-8 provides the results for complaints about abandoned vehicles. The data show improved results for 2005. Interaction for abandoned vehicles improved from 90 percent to 96 percent, while responsiveness for abandoned vehicles improved from 83 percent to 88 percent. Figure 10-9 provides the results for complaints about rundown houses.

**Figure 10-8: Citizens' Perceptions of Interaction and Responsiveness to Complaints About Abandoned Vehicles**

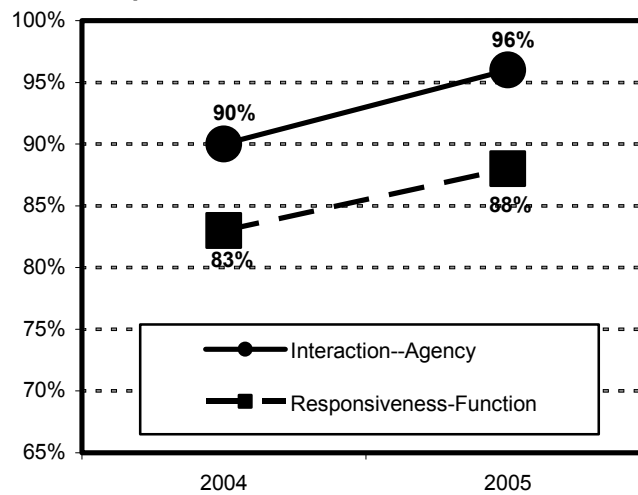
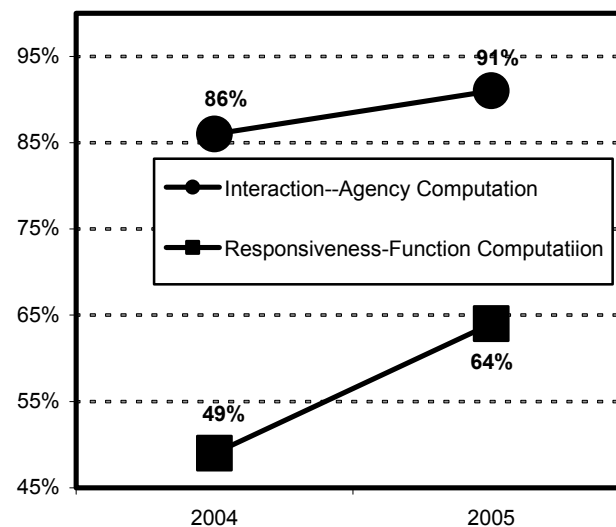


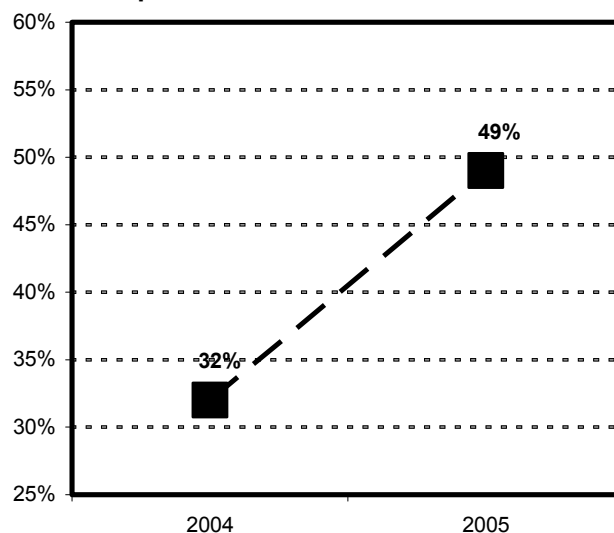
Figure 10-9 shows the same positive assessment by the citizens. Interaction for rundown houses improved from 86 percent to 91 percent. Responsiveness for rundown houses improved from 49 percent to 64 percent.

**Figure 10-9: Citizens' Perceptions of Interaction and Responsiveness for Complaints About Rundown Houses**



The results for code enforcement are positive because of the very noticeable improvements in the citizens' ratings. The findings were especially impressive for code enforcement's responsiveness related to rundown houses.

**Figure 10-10: Citizens' Perceptions of Performance for Responding to Complaints About Rundown Houses**



One of the components of responsiveness is performance which measures whether the Citizens' concerns were solved as a result of the contact for service. Figure 10-10 shows that in 2004 only 32 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the performance of the agency. This is the lowest score ever received for performance in the history of the Memphis Poll. In contrast, 49 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the performance of code enforcement in 2005. This result was an exceptionally high 17 percent improvement in the performance of the agency.

## **Office of Planning and Development**

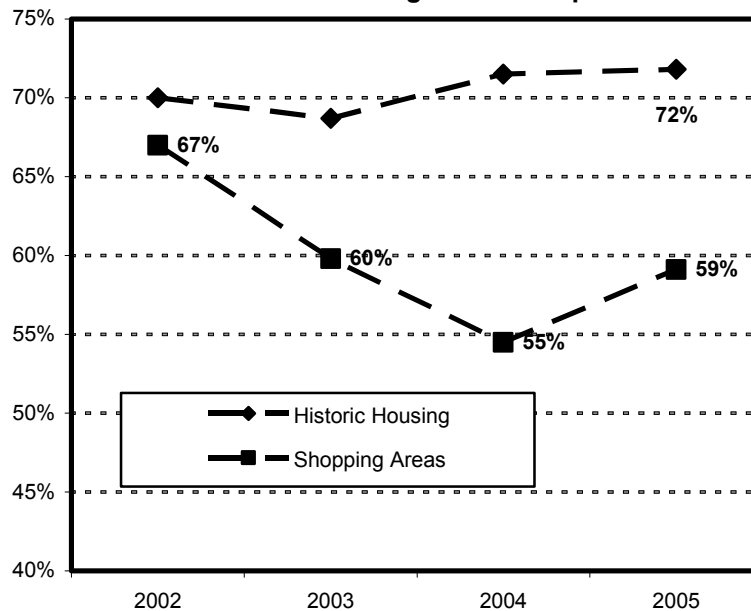
The Office of Planning and Development (OPD) has a role in neighborhoods through land use planning and zoning. OPD also provides services to the Landmarks Commission, which is involved in design issues in historic neighborhoods. In addition, OPD is involved in improving the condition of neighborhood shopping centers. It manages a commercial revitalization grant program for inner city neighborhoods. It is also responsible for code enforcement that involves commercial buildings and shopping centers.

Citizens were asked how well the City was doing in providing specific services with a neighborhood orientation. Figure 10-11 shows the results for areas related to the Office of Planning and Development. Overall, citizens thought these efforts were mediocre in preserving historic housing. Seventy-two (72) percent of the citizens thought the City was doing a good job of preserving historic

housing and buildings. The results were about the same compared to the previous two years of the Memphis Poll.

In contrast, the results for improving shopping areas were more problematic. Sixty-seven (67) percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's efforts in dealing with shopping areas in 2002. Although showing small improvements between 2004 and 2005, the 2005 rating remains low at 59 percent.

**Figure 10-11: Trends in Neighborhood Services for the Office of Planning and Development**



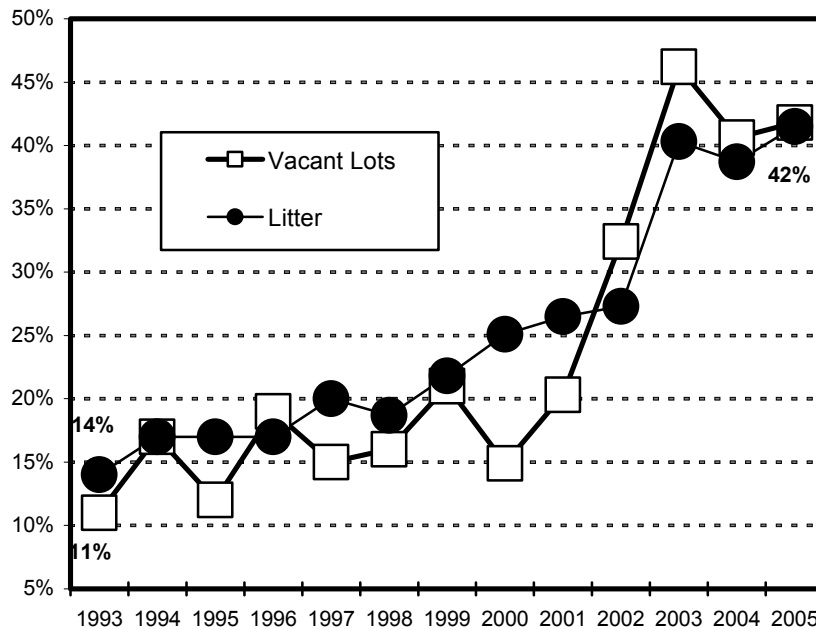
## General Services Division

The General Services Division maintains programs that focus on City and neighborhood cleanliness and beautification. It is involved in street sweeping and mowing vacant lots. It also administers the City Beautiful Commission, which receives both private and public funds to improve the physical appearance of the City.

The 2005 Memphis Poll provided information about two neighborhood conditions related to the mission of General Services—trash and weeds on vacant lots and litter on streets. The division maintains a weed office that takes complaints about vacant lots. In addition, the City Beautiful Commission has long been concerned about litter on neighborhood streets. It also does yearly surveys of the extent of actual litter in the City.

Citizens identified trash and weeds on vacant lots as concerns in their neighborhoods. Figure 10-12 shows that 42 percent of citizens were concerned about vacant lots and litter. These are high levels of concerns, as shown by the previous chapter.

**Figure 10-12: Concerns About Physical Conditions—Litter and Vacant Lots**

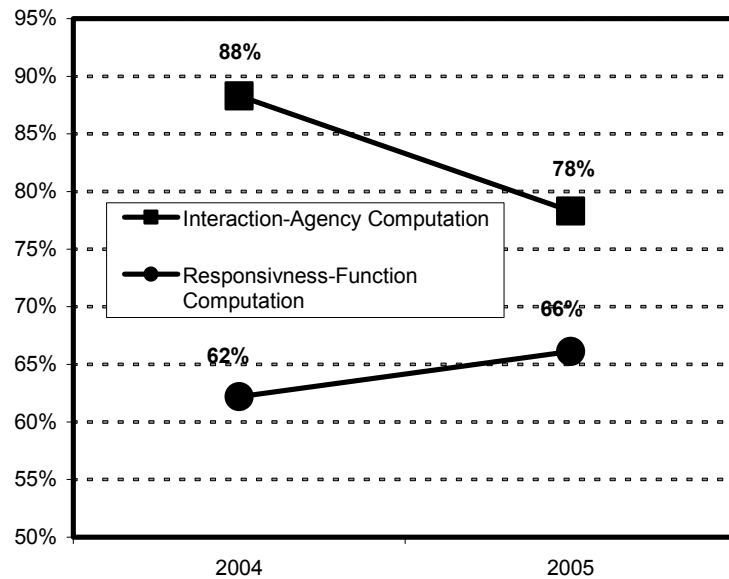


Memphis Poll was able to gather information about the General Services weed office. Figure 10-13 shows the ratings provided by the citizens when they called the office for assistance.

Seventy-eight (78) percent of the citizens were satisfied with the interaction of the office. The ratings declined 10 percent over a one-year period. In contrast, only 66 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness of the office. The 2005 results were a slight improvement over 2004.



**Figure 10-13: Citizens' Perceptions of General Services Interaction and Responsiveness for Vacant Lots**



### **Key Findings about Services and Neighborhood Physical Conditions**

- ❑ Citizens rated many of the services related to neighborhood conditions described in this chapter as below average when compared to overall City services.
- ❑ The citizens felt that the code enforcement agency, now located in the Division of Housing and Community Development, had improved when compared to the previous year of the Memphis Poll.

# Chapter 11

## Public Works Division

This chapter examines the services provided by the Public Works Division. This Division provides solid waste collection through solid waste management. Public Works also provides street maintenance, works on sewers, and addresses problems with rivers and streams.

Latter portions of this chapter will address some of the concerns that citizens had about the physical conditions in their neighborhoods, which relate to the mission of this division.

### Solid Waste Management Services

The Memphis Poll asked questions about a variety of services offered by solid waste management. This section first examines four measures of direct services—promptness, recycling services, neatness, and uncontained trash collection. The following data are from citizens who received solid waste services from City of Memphis crews and excluded those that received their services from private companies.

**Figure 11-1: Citizens' Perceptions of Solid Waste Management Services**

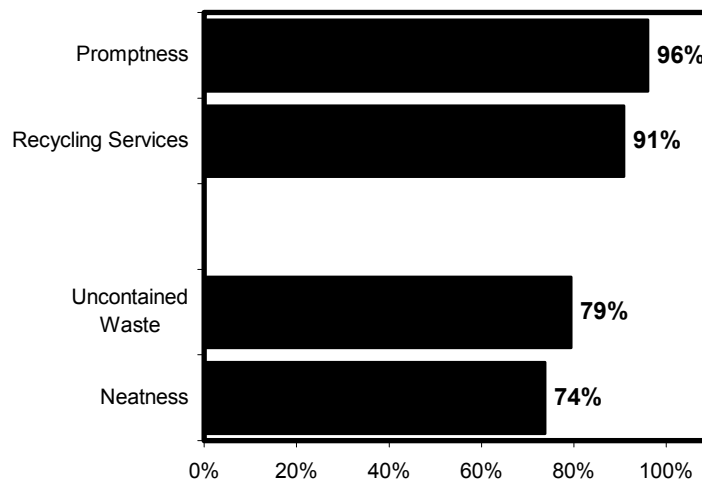
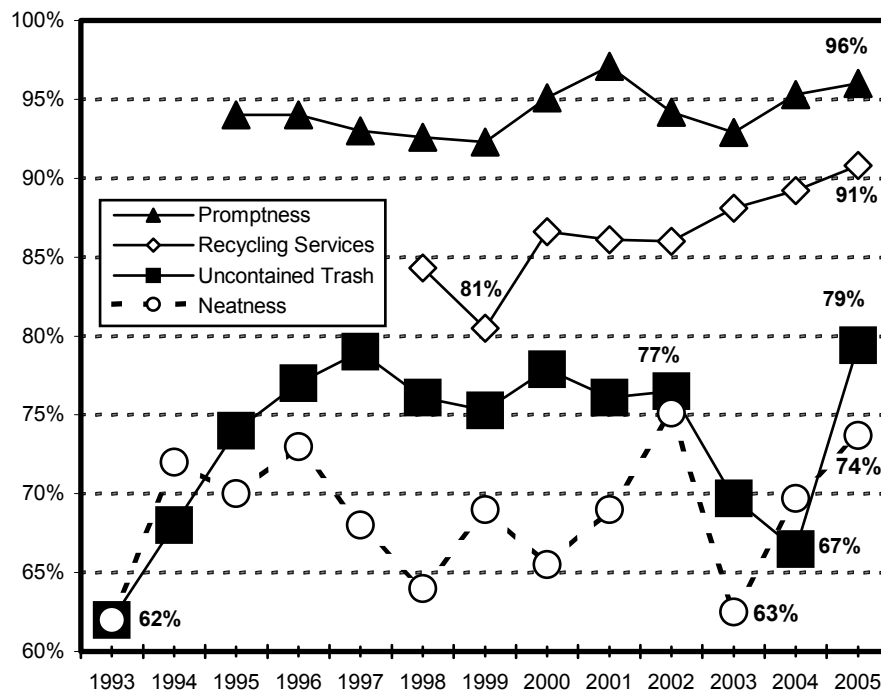


Figure 11-1 displays the results for promptness by asking if solid waste collectors consistently emptied the cart on the regular collection day. A very high 96 percent agreed with this statement, which made promptness one of the most

highly rated services in the Memphis Poll. Figure 11-2 displays the trends for promptness. It shows that promptness had remarkable consistency over time in the same range of ratings for the years of the Memphis Poll in which this was measured.

The Poll examined citizens' perceptions of recycling services on solid waste routes. Citizens were asked if the solid waste collectors emptied the recycling materials on the scheduled collection day. Figure 11-1 shows 91 percent of the citizens agreed with this statement, which was well-above average when compared to all services in the Memphis Poll. Figure 11-2 shows that recycling improved in the last two years. The long-term trend also shows improvement from 81 percent in 1999 to 91 percent in 2005.

**Figure 11-2: Trends in Citizens' Perceptions of Solid Waste Management Services**



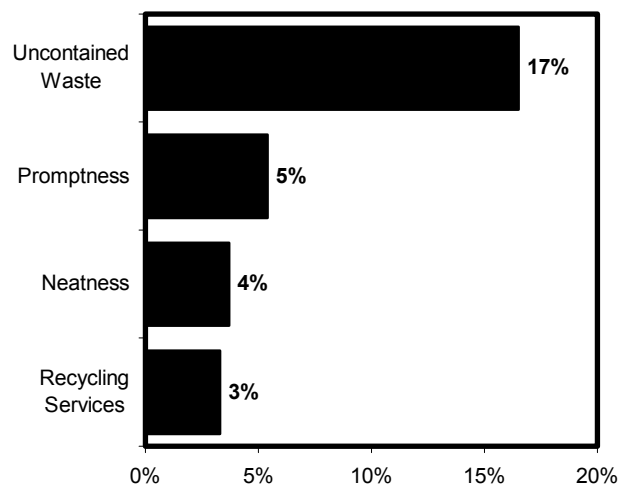
Next, the ratings for collection of uncontained trash/yard waste (called uncontained trash) were examined by asking whether solid waste collectors picked up large items, such as limbs and appliances within one week. Figure 11-1 shows that 79 percent of the citizens agreed with the statement. This rating was at the average when compared to the score for overall City services.

The trend data in Figure 11-2 show that citizens were increasingly pleased with uncontained trash collection when compared to earlier years of the Memphis Polls. Citizens' satisfaction with uncontained trash collection declined in both 2003 and 2004. However, in 2005, seventy-nine (79) percent of the citizens were satisfied with uncontained waste collection, a 12 percent improvement in one year.

The next service, neatness, was measured by whether citizens thought solid waste collectors were careful by not spilling waste when emptying carts. Neatness in the City appeals to citizens because it shows that the City cares about its neighborhoods. Neatness by solid waste collection crews decreases the levels of trash and litter on Memphis streets.

Seventy-four (74) percent of the citizens were satisfied with neatness, a figure that was slightly below average when compared to the score for overall City services. However, the trend data for neatness were very positive. The ratings for neatness increased from 63 percent in 2003 to 74 percent in 2005.

**Figure 11-3: Percent Difference City  
Solid Waste Service Minus Private  
Company Service**



Next, the Memphis Poll examined if there were differences on the service measures between citizens that had collection by City of Memphis crews or private companies. Eighty four (84) percent of the citizens said they received collection from City crews and 16 percent said they received collection from private companies.

A ten percent difference is used as a criterion to judge whether differences between groups are important. Figure 11-3 shows that three of the measures do not meet this criterion and thus lead to the conclusion that the differences are so minimal as not to be important. These measures include recycling services, neatness, and promptness.

However, the findings for uncontained wastes exceed the ten percent criterion. Specifically, citizens that used City crews were 17 percent more satisfied with the pick up of uncontained wastes than those that had crews from private companies.

## Contacting Solid Waste Management Services

This section discusses the citizens' ratings when they called solid waste management for assistance about service concerns. For example, citizens may have called to complain about a missed collection day or the need to pick up uncontained trash.

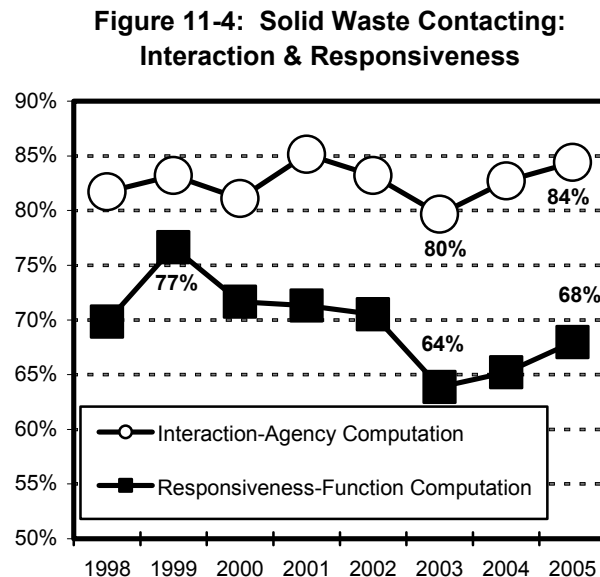


Figure 11-4 provides the ratings for interaction with citizens by solid waste management's employees. Eight-four (84) percent of the citizens were satisfied with interaction, which included phone professionalism and courtesy. This result was slightly below the average score for overall interaction for all City agencies.

Figure 11-4 provides the trend data for interaction with solid waste management. The scores from 1998 to 2005 were consistently in a range from 80 percent to 85

percent. The time period of 2003 to 2005 shows some incremental improvements in ratings.

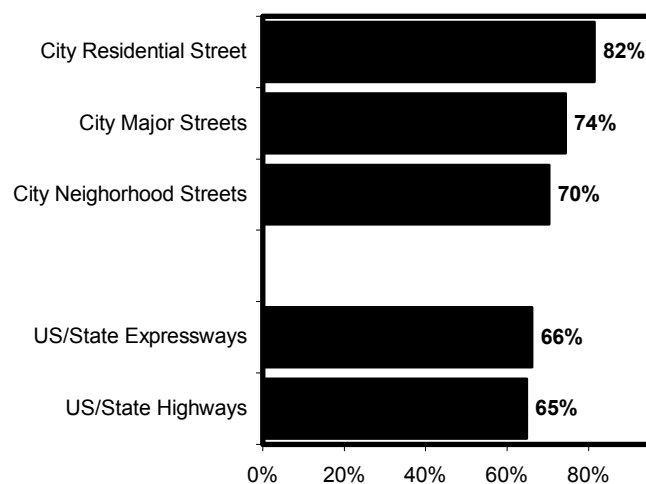
In contrast, Figure 11-4 shows that only 68 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness of the service. Responsiveness involved both promptness in responding to the concerns and solving the concerns. This result was similar to the average responsiveness for all City agencies.

Figure 11-4 also provides the trend data for responsiveness by solid waste management. Responsiveness for this service reached its highest rating of 77 percent in 1999, but this figure dropped to 68 percent in 2005. The time period of 2003 to 2005 shows some incremental improvements in ratings.

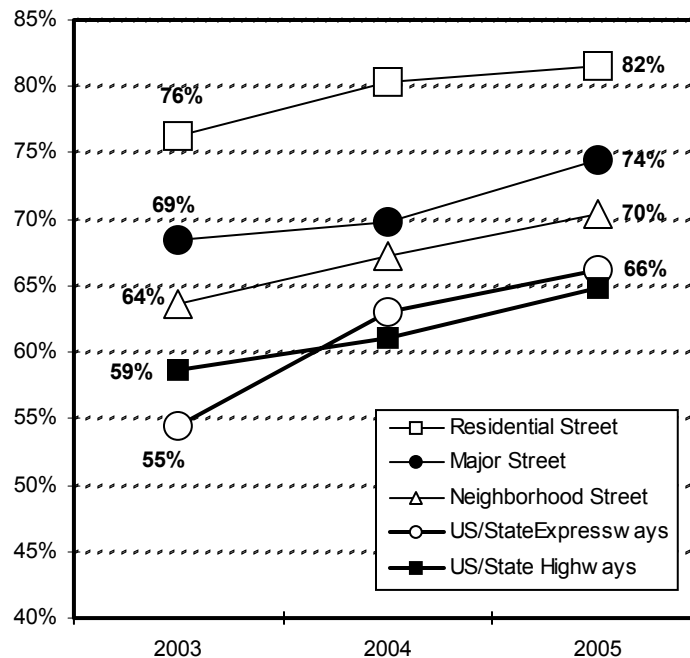
## Street Maintenance Services

Street maintenance services are located within the Public Works Division. Figure 11-5 provides the citizens' responses concerning street maintenance services. Citizens were asked if streets were well maintained and if potholes were patched within a reasonable time. Figure 11-6 provides the trend data for street maintenance services. The Memphis Poll asked the questions explicitly so that the City and US/State responsibilities were clearly stated in the Poll questions.

**Figure 11-5: Street Maintenance by Type of Street and Governmental Responsibility**



**Figure 11-6: Citizen's Perceptions of Trends in Street Maintenance**



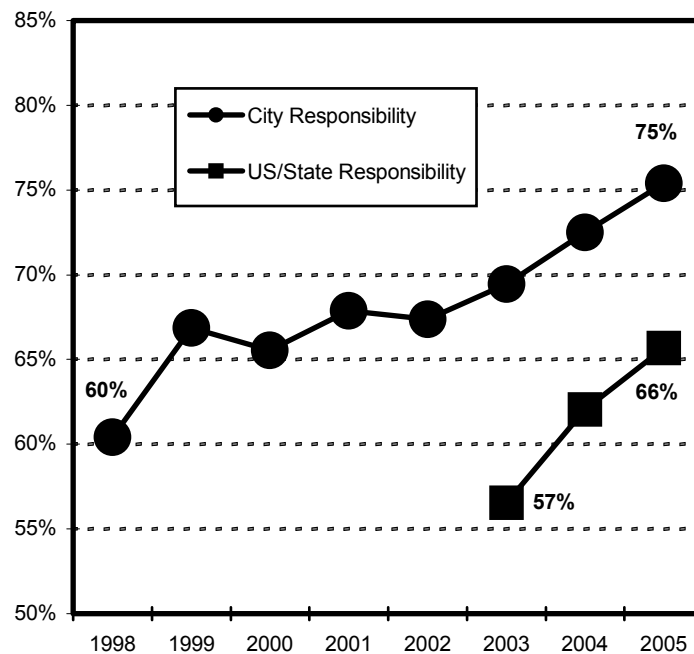
City Responsibility: The citizens were asked if they were satisfied with the maintenance of City streets in front of their houses, which were called residential streets. Eighty-two (82) percent of the citizens indicated that they were satisfied with the maintenance of their residential streets. Next, citizens were asked if they were satisfied with the major streets that were the City's responsibility. The question mentioned specific streets such as Frayser Blvd, Walnut Grove Rd, Park Ave, Milbranch, Mendenhall, White Station, and Yale Rd. The Poll found that 74 percent of the citizens were satisfied with these streets. Next, citizens were asked if their neighborhood streets were well maintained and 70 percent were satisfied with the City's performance. The trend data in Figure 11-6 showed consistent improvement in each of these street types in the three years in which these questions were asked.

US/State Responsibility: The Poll found that 66 percent of the citizens were satisfied with maintenance on the expressways. The Memphis Poll also asked if US/State highways were well maintained. The question specifically mentioned examples such as Elvis Presley Blvd, Poplar Ave, Jackson Ave, Summer Ave, Lamar Ave, and Austin Peay Hwy. Sixty-five (65) percent of the citizens agreed that these highways were well maintained. The trend data in Figure 11-6 showed consistent improvement in each of these street types in the three years in which these questions were asked.

Next, Figure 11-7 provides an overall summary of the trends for streets that are City responsibilities and US/State responsibilities. The data for the City included a period that started in 1998, while the state/federal data were only available since 2003.

The citizens were more satisfied with the street maintenance that was the City's responsibility than the US/State responsibility. The average score for the three types of streets that are the City's responsibility was 75 percent. In contrast, the average score for the highways that are state/federal governments' responsibility was 66 percent.

**Figure 11-7: Citizens' Perceptions of Street Maintenance Trends**



The City trend shows consistent annual improvements in the citizens' ratings. In 1998, only 60 percent of the citizens were satisfied with street maintenance that was the City's responsibility. By 2005, the overall rating improved to 75 percent. The three-year data for US/State responsibilities showed an improvement of 9 percent in the citizens' ratings, albeit, the overall US/State ratings remain well below that of the City ratings.

Overall, these data show that there were consistent improvements in street maintenance for each of the measures, whether City responsibility or



state/federal responsibility. These results were impressive and suggest that resources were placed into street improvements over time.

## Contacting Street Maintenance Service

The Memphis Poll also examined interaction and responsiveness when the citizens contacted street maintenance about their concerns.

**Figure 11-8: Street Contacting:  
Interaction & Responsiveness**

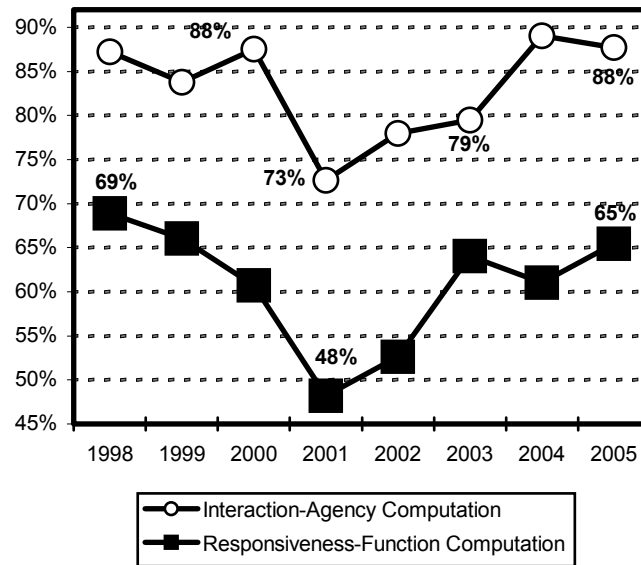


Figure 11-8 shows that the ratings for contacting interaction were positive.<sup>19</sup> Eighty-eight (88) percent of the citizens were satisfied with interaction when calling street maintenance about concerns. This rating was near the average for the overall rating of all City agencies. Street services showed a consistent and impressive improvement in interaction over time. In 2001, the interaction rating for street maintenance was 73 percent and that improved to 88 percent in 2005.

Figure 11-8 also shows that the results for responsiveness were not as positive as for interaction.<sup>20</sup> Only 65 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness of street maintenance services. However, this rating was only slightly below the overall City rating for responsiveness. The trend data show that responsiveness of the streets maintenance office increased from 48 percent in 2001 to 65 percent in 2005. It also appears that responsiveness has stabilized at near 65 percent over the last three years.

<sup>19</sup> Interaction refers to the citizens' ratings for phone professionalism and courtesy.

<sup>20</sup> Responsiveness refers to the citizens rating for promptness and performance by solving the problems.

## Public Works Division

The Public Works Division provides services related to physical conditions that have an impact on the quality of a neighborhood. These specific physical conditions include street drainage, alley maintenance, pollution of rivers and streams, and streetlights. Pollution of rivers/streams is a function shared with the State of Tennessee.

This section provides a context for examining these conditions. Until 2001, citizens expressed few concerns about physical conditions. However, the last three years of the Memphis Poll have shown increases in citizens' concerns. The results for these conditions are presented in separate figures for display purposes.

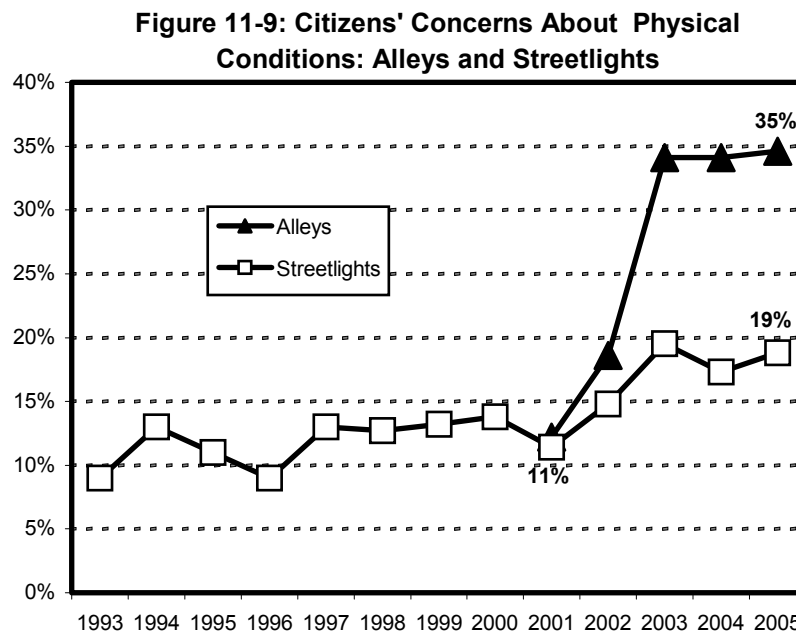
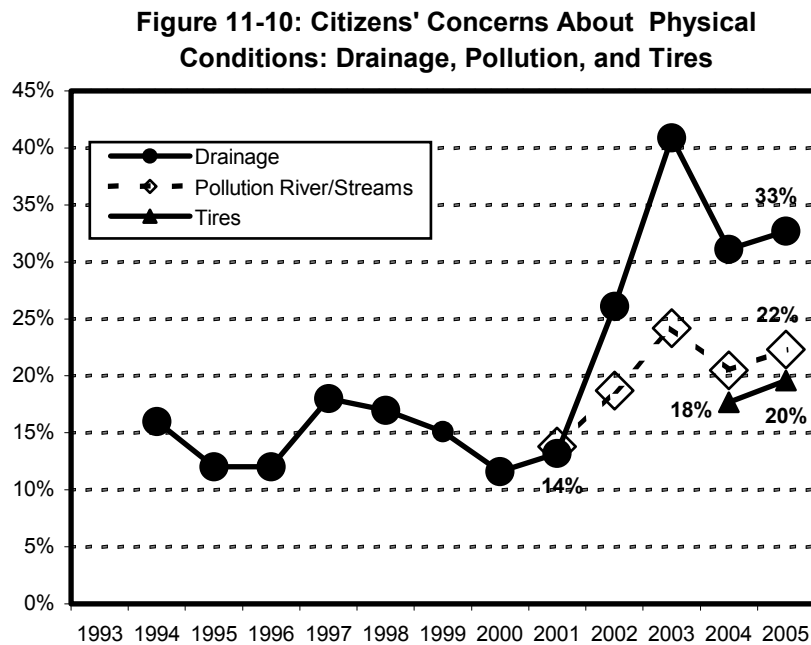


Figure 11-9 provides information about maintenance of City alleys. The trend data show substantial increases in citizens' concerns over time. In 2001, only 11 percent of the citizens were concerned about alley maintenance, but in 2005, this result had increased to 35 percent. The results have stabilized around 35 percent over the last three years.

Figure 11-9 also provides information about streetlights on neighborhood streets. The level of concerns was 17 percent in 2004. Streetlights are only very modest concerns for the citizens and the change in the ratings over time has been minimal.

Figure 11-10 provides information about drainage after rainstorms. The 2003 Memphis Poll showed that these data are very sensitive to the level of rainstorms. The data for 2002 and 2003 showed large increases in concerns because of the large rainstorms that hit the City. The data for 2004 and 2005 show a downturn in the level of concern, although the results remain considerably higher than in 2001 and earlier.

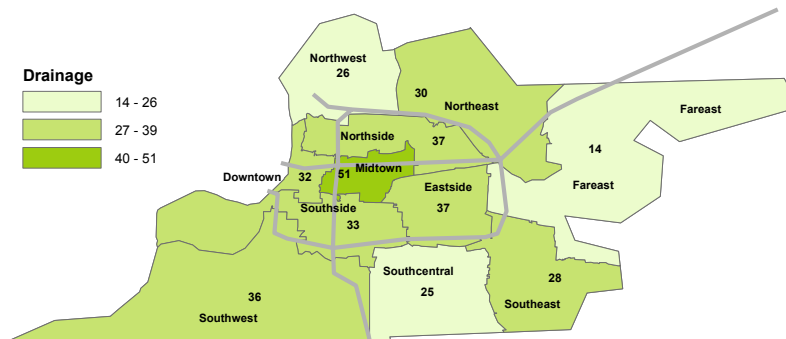


The results for drainage after rainstorms are also displayed in the map in Figure 11-11. The map shows that the greatest concerns about drainage were in Midtown. It appears that there is some variation in concerns by area of the City from year to year.

Figure 11-10 also examines pollution of rivers and streams. Only 22 percent of the citizens were concerned about this issue. There was a modest increase in concerns from 14 percent in 2001 to 22 percent in 2005.

Finally, the Memphis Poll asked if tires were left on neighborhood streets for more than two weeks. This was a new issue in the 2004 Memphis Poll. It was thought that that some inner city neighborhoods had infestations of tires on public streets. Solid waste management is responsible for collecting tires on public areas. Figure 11-10 shows that there were modest concerns with 18 percent of the citizens' rating tires as problems in their neighborhoods.

**Figure 11-11: Concerns About Drainage After Rainstorms in 2005 By Sections of the City**



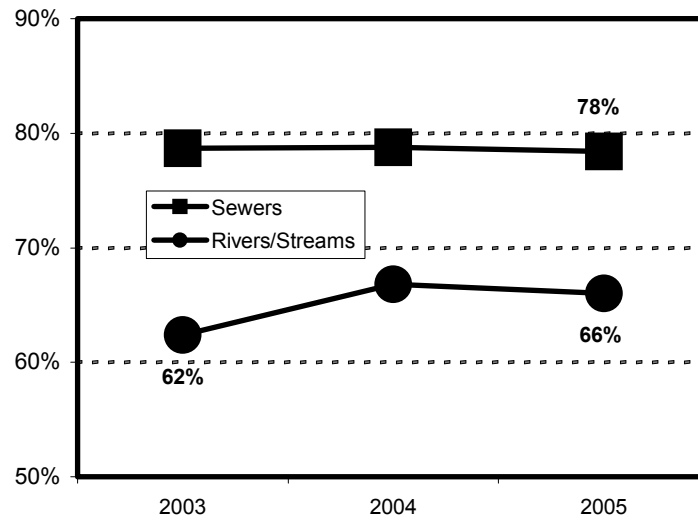
## Assessing Neighborhood Services

The 2003 Memphis Poll introduced a series of new questions about how well the City was doing in providing specific services to neighborhoods. These questions reflected the City's priority to respond to the needs of neighborhoods and the Mayor's public pronouncements about the importance of neighborhoods to the overall development of Memphis.

Two questions were asked about sewer maintenance and pollution abatement of rivers and streams, which are services of the Division of Public Works. The Memphis Poll asked the citizens if the City was doing a good job of maintaining the sewer system in the citizens' neighborhoods. Figure 11-12 shows that 78 percent agreed that the City was doing a good job. This finding was consistent throughout the three years of the Memphis Poll for which this information was collected.

The Poll also asked if the City was doing a good job improving the quality of rivers and streams in the citizens' neighborhoods. This is a function that the Public Works Division shares with the State of Tennessee and the Health Department. Figure 11-13 shows that 66 percent of citizens agreed that the City was doing a good job, which was below average for overall City services. The data were generally consistent throughout the three years of the Memphis Poll during which this information was collected.

**Figure 11-12: Citizens' Perceptions of Neighborhood Services**



### **Key Findings**

- ❑ Citizens rated the promptness of solid waste collection and the collection of recycling services as very positive.
- ❑ Neatness and uncontained trash had improved ratings in 2005.
- ❑ Citizens thought that all types of streets were better maintained in 2005 than in previous years and this was a long-term trend.

# Chapter 12

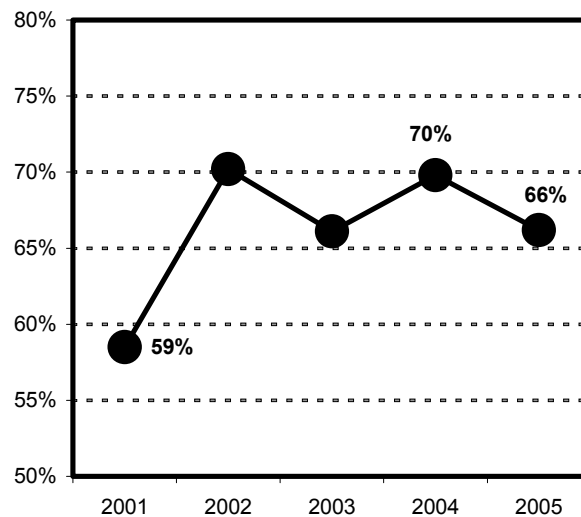
## Communication with Citizens

This chapter discusses the communication of information between citizens and City government. It examines the perceptions that citizens have of City-initiated attempts to inform them about governmental activity. It also examines citizen-initiated contact with City government and citizens' perception of the quality of work performed by the City as a result of that contact.

### City-Initiated Communication

The City informs citizens about public issues and services. This section examines the perceptions that citizens had of City-initiated attempts to inform them about governmental activity. This is the fifth year in which the Memphis Poll has included these questions.

**Figure 12-1: Citizens' Satisfaction with Being Informed by the City**



Citizens were asked how well the City kept them informed regarding City government matters that affected them. Figure 12-1 shows that 66 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's attempts to inform citizens. The trends show that after the low point of 2001, satisfaction has been within the range of 65 percent to 70 percent.

Whites were less satisfied than African Americans about being informed by the City.

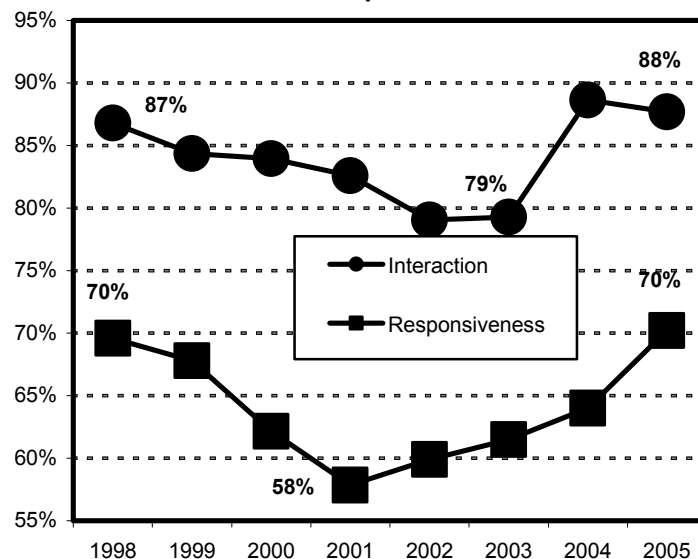
## Contacting City Government

This section introduces information about citizens' perceptions of their contact with governmental officials and City employees. The 2004 Memphis Poll added numerous questions about contacting since there was an interest in City Hall to have more information than previously available. As a result, the Memphis Poll now provides extensive details about contacting previously not available.

The data on contacting should be used carefully because of small sample sizes. For example, if only 10 percent of the citizens contacted a service, the opinions of only 91 citizens were used to determine how citizens rated the service. Despite this limitation, the data are worth examining, but only with that caveat in mind.

The figures will refer to both the reason for the call (function) and the source of intake for the complaint or issue (intake agency). A function computation means all of the data for a call to City Hall is included. For example, it would include all of the data for solid waste. In contrast, an agency computation refers to the specific agency handling the call. For instance, the calls regarding solid waste might have been handled by the Division of Public Works or the Mayor's Citizen Service Center.

**Figure 12-2: Citizens' Contacting as Interaction and Responsiveness-Function Computation**



The discussion will start with some overall findings. Subsequent sections will provide much more detail. The reader may want to consult the key findings at the end of this chapter for an overview.

Contacting was initiated by citizens and typically involved expressions of concerns about specific services and a request for City action. Citizens did not always remember a specific contact when a broad question was asked, such as whether they contacted a City office. Therefore, the Memphis Poll asked specific questions about contacting the City about particular functions or concerns. These results were combined into two measures of contacting: interaction and responsiveness.

Interaction involves citizens' satisfaction with their communication with the City agencies. Specifically, interaction is a combination of phone professionalism and courtesy. Figure 12-2 shows that 88 percent of the citizens were satisfied in their interactions with City officials.

The trend data confirm that there has been an improvement in the ratings over time. Figure 12-2 shows that from 1998 to 2003 there was a consistent decline in the citizens' ratings for interaction from 87 percent to 79 percent. The ratings in 2004 showed improvement compared to the 2003 Memphis Poll.

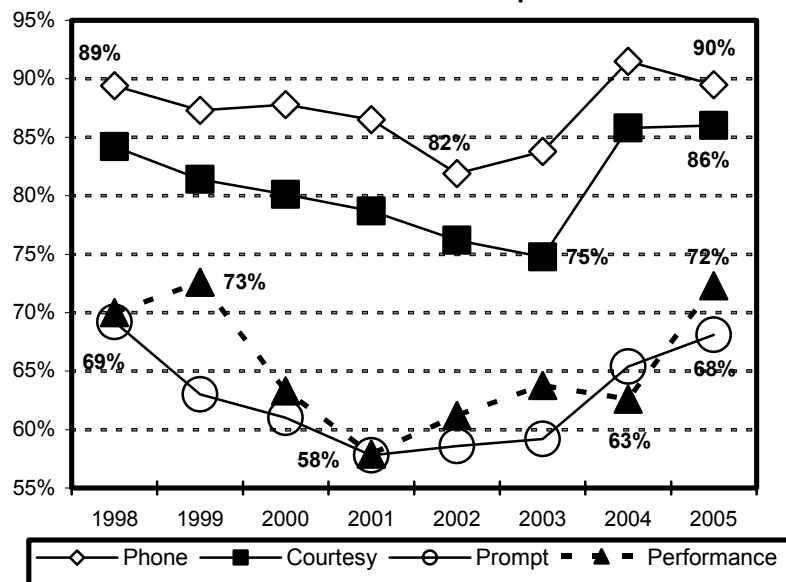
Figure 12-3 provides the specific components of interaction. It shows that citizens were more satisfied with phone professionalism (90 percent) than with courtesy (86 percent). Otherwise, the trend lines for phone professionalism and courtesy have mirrored each other over time.

The ratings for responsiveness were substantially lower than interaction. Responsiveness refers to citizens' rating of the promptness and the performance of the City in solving the concern. Figure 12-2 shows that only 70 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness of City officials as a result of the contact. The trend data show a steady decline to the lowest point in 2001 and an equally steady improvement in ratings to 2005. The 2005 ratings for responsiveness were the highest since this topic was first studied in 1998.

Figure 12-3 shows the trend lines for promptness and performance, which are the two components of responsiveness. Overall, the two trends have been similar over the six years of the Memphis Poll in which these issues have been examined. However, performance showed a 9 percent improvement in the 2005 Memphis Poll.



**Figure 12-3: Citizens' Contacting as Phone Professionalism, Courtesy, Promptness, and Performance-Function Computation**



These results show low levels of citizens' satisfaction about the responsiveness of the City. Many citizens felt that the City was not solving their problems when they contacted City Hall for assistance. However, it does appear that the rating for responsiveness has improved.

## The Extent of Contacting

This section discusses the level of contacting and the specific agencies that were contacted.

Figure 12-4 shows that 41 percent of the citizens contacted the City in the last year regarding six issues or functions discussed below, which are called conventional contacts. The conventional contacts included calls about solid waste, streets, vacant lots, abandoned vehicles, rundown houses, and other calls directly to the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC).

Information was collected about two other sources of citizens' contacting which were not a topic of this chapter. Forty-four (44) percent of the citizens called Memphis, Light, Gas and Water, which made it a major call center for the City of Memphis. Chapter 8 discusses the calls that were made to Memphis, Light, Gas and Water. Forty-five (45) percent of the citizens also made emergency calls for police, fire, and ambulance, making that area a major call center.

**Figure 12-4: Percent of Citizens Contacting City Hall**

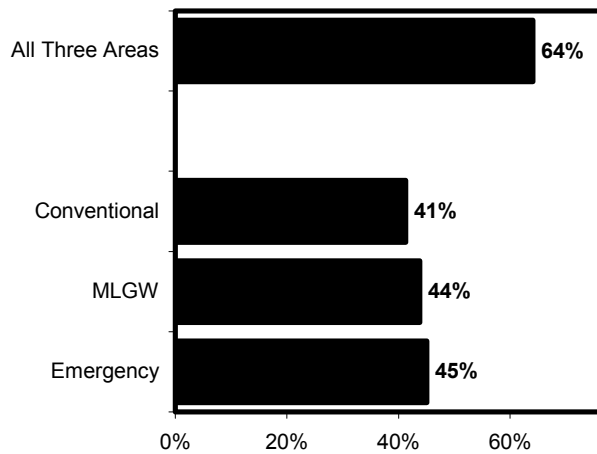


Figure 12-4 also shows that 64 percent of the citizens called at least one of the following areas: conventional, MLGW, or emergency. Overall, these data suggests that the agencies at City Hall received an enormous number of calls from citizens.

Figure 12-5 shows the data for the extent of contacting for conventional service areas. It shows that 28 percent of the citizens contacted one service, another 8 percent of the citizens called two services, and 5 percent called three to six conventional services.

**Figure 12-5: Number of Agencies Contacted by Citizens for Six Conventional Service Areas**

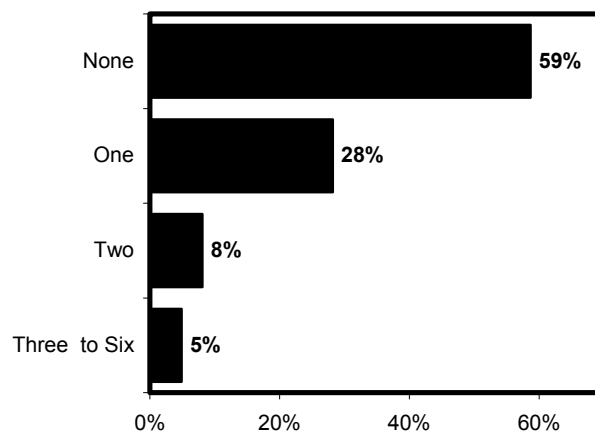
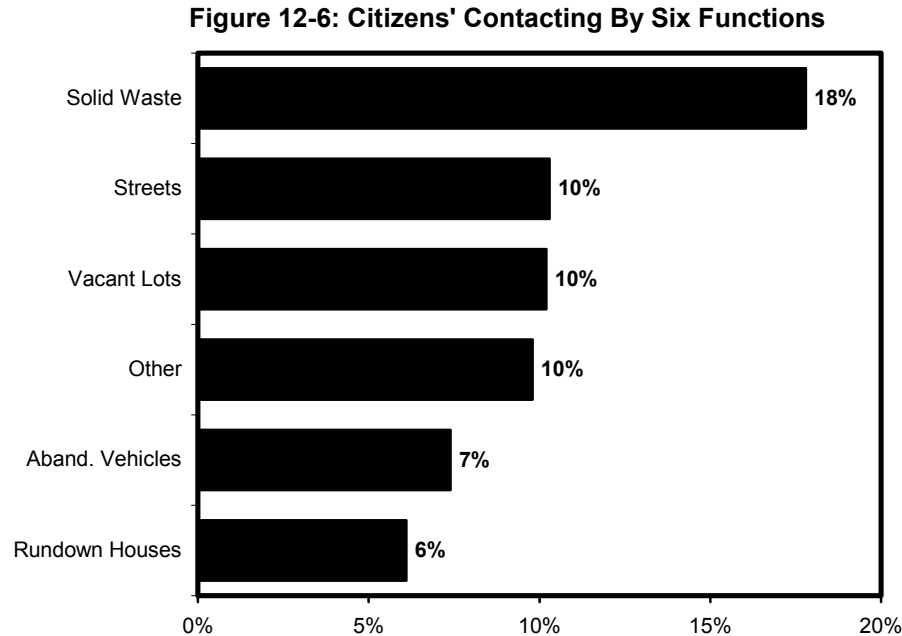


Figure 12-6 provides the data for the extent of citizens' contacting for the six functions. The largest number of contacts was made regarding solid waste

services, with 18 percent. The next tier of functions was at 10 percent and included streets, vacant lots, and other concerns.<sup>21</sup> Abandoned vehicles (7 percent) and rundown houses (6 percent) generated the fewest contact.



Next, it was possible to determine the intake agencies for the complaints for these functions.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 12-7 shows the agencies that performed the intake for the functions discussed above. The first tier with the highest percentage of contacts was the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC) with 26 percent.

The next tier included the Public Works' Solid Waste Management Services with 15 percent.

The following tier in Figure 12-7 was made up of Public Works Division's street maintenance with 7 percent, and Housing and Community Development Division's code enforcement with 7 percent.

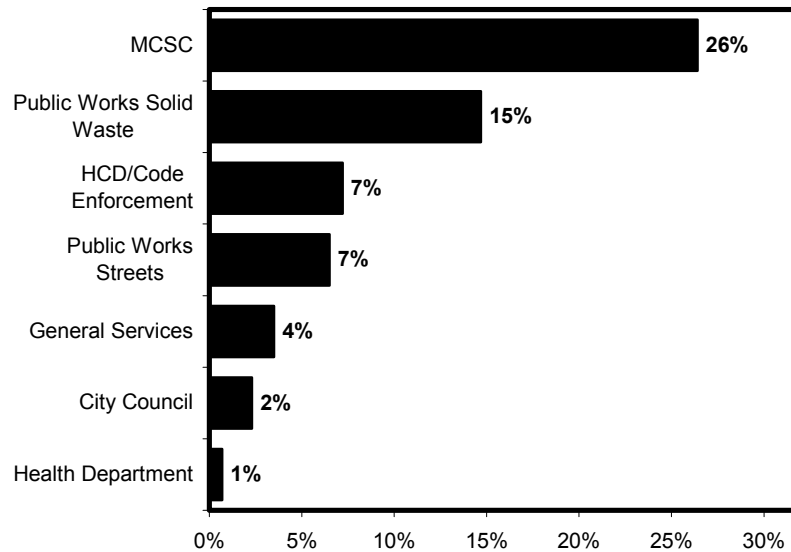
Three agencies trailed with a limited number of intake contacts ranging from 1 to 4 percent: General Services Division's weed office, City Council and the Health

<sup>21</sup> "Other concerns" were the complaints that went directly to the Mayor's Citizen Service Center and do not include solid waste, streets, vacant lots, junk cars, or rundown houses.

<sup>22</sup> These data required estimation. As a result, there could be up to a 2 percent variation brought about by the estimation process.

Department. The Health Department contacts were for the concerns in this section and not health related issues, which were not measured in this Poll.

**Figure 12-7: Intake Office for Citizens' Contacting by Division or Office (Estimated)**



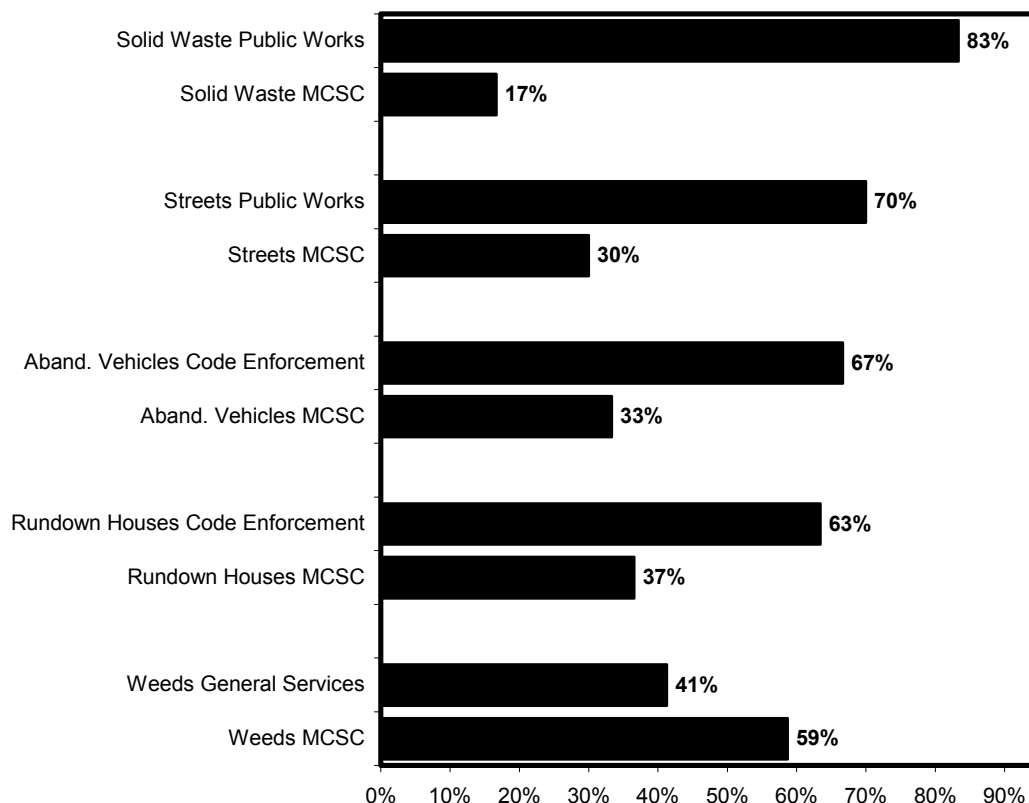
Next, the Poll examined if the intake for each function was performed by the operating agency or by the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC). These data were paired to compare the ratings for the primary operating agency and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. Other minor intake points, such as the Health Department and the City Council, were omitted due to the low levels of citizen-initiated contacts.

Figure 12-8 displays the results by intake source (Mayor's Citizen Service Center or operating agency) for citizens' contacts and by function. The highest level of intake was performed by the two Public Works' services, solid waste and street maintenance with 83 percent and 70 percent of the contacts respectively. Code enforcement also had relatively high intake for abandoned vehicles (67 percent) and rundown houses (63 percent).

Only the weed service for vacant lots in the General Services Division had low levels of intake with only 41 percent. The Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC) performed intake on 59 percent of the cases for weeds on vacant lots. It appears that citizens did not call the weed office directly because there was not a phone number in the phone directory blue pages for weeds or vacant lot

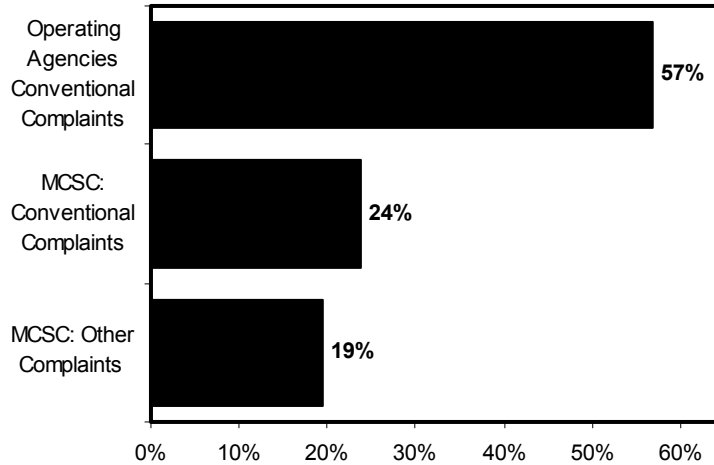
complaints. The Director of General Services indicated that this was an explicit strategy on their part. She said that the agency did not have the staff to maintain an answer line and that the Mayor's Citizen Service Center met the needs of her office. She felt this was an efficient use of City resources.

**Figure 12-8: Intake Source for Citizens' Contacts (Estimated)  
Comparing Operating Agencies and MCSC-Agency Computation**



Next, the Poll combined this information to examine the policy implications of these data. Figure 12-9 shows the overall source of the intake for the citizens' contacts with City Hall. Fifty-seven (57) percent of the intake for conventional complaints was done by the operating agencies themselves. Twenty-four (24) percent of the intake for conventional complaints was done by the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC). Intake for the other 19 percent of the complaints was done by the Mayor's Citizen Services Center. Overall, 81 percent (57 percent plus 21 percent) of the contacts were for conventional complaints and probably all of them should have been handled directly by the operating agencies.

**Figure 12-9: Intake Source for Citizens' Contacts  
Agency Computation (Estimated)**



## Interaction

This section will examine whether the Mayor's Citizen Service Center or the operating agencies did a better job of responding to citizens. It will provide information about two components of interaction—phone professionalism and courtesy. The data will be presented for the function (the reason the citizens made the call to City Hall) and the agencies (the intake agencies for the citizens' concerns).

**Figure 12-10: Citizens' Perception of Contact by  
City Function - Answered Phone Professionally**

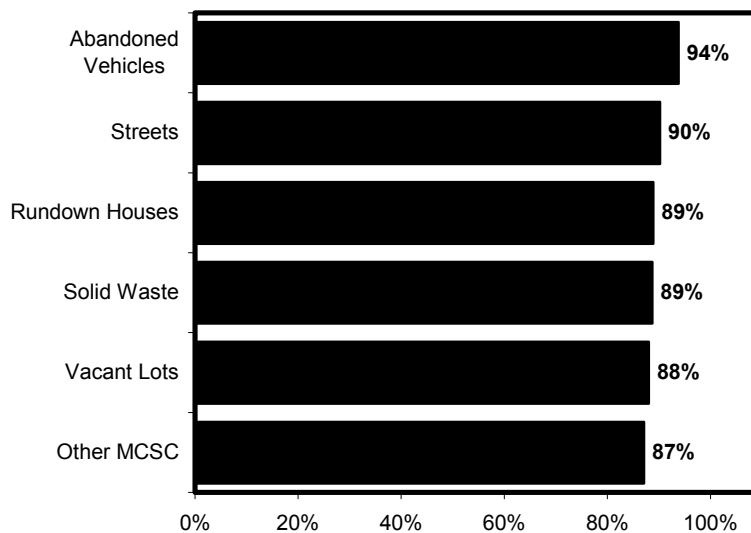
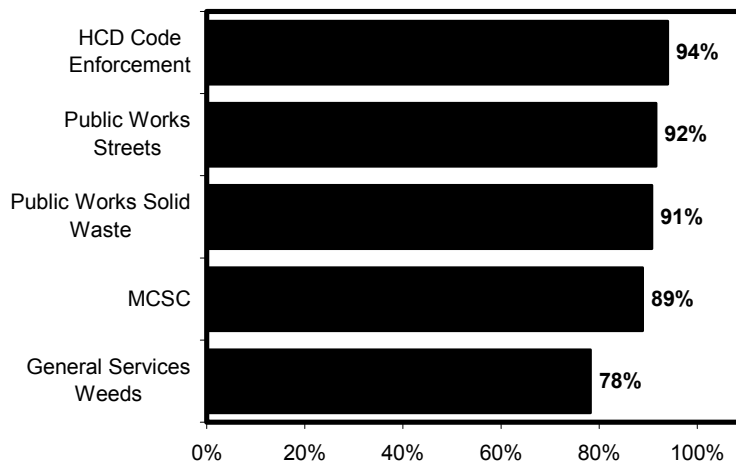


Figure 12-10 provides the citizens' ratings for answering the phone professionally by function. The data shows little difference between the different services that clustered in a range from 87 to 94 percent.

Figure 12-11 provides the ratings for answering the phone professionally by the agencies that did the intake. These ratings suggest two tiers. The higher tier ranged from 89 percent to 94 percent and included the Division of Housing and Community Development's code enforcement, the Public Works Divisions' street maintenance, Public Works Division's solid waste, and Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC).

**Figure 12-11: Citizens' Perception of Contact with City Agency - Answered Phone Professionally**

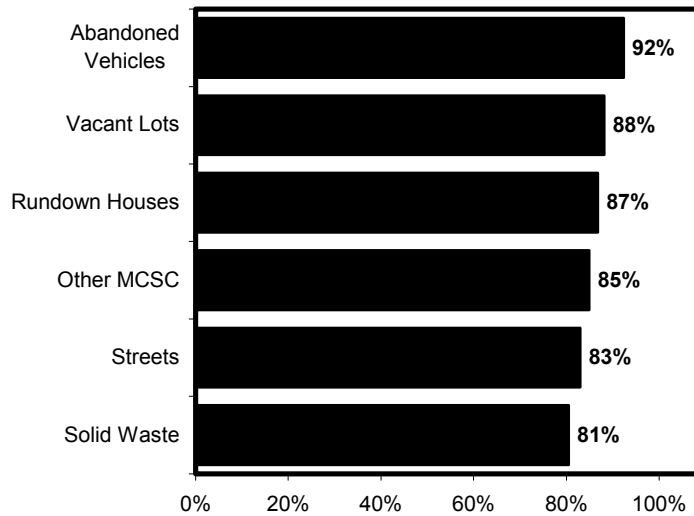


The lower tier only included the General Services Division's weed office that dealt with vacant lots. Only 78 percent of Citizens were satisfied with the phone professionalism of the weeds office, fully 11 percent lower than the next lowest agency on the list.

This section also examines the second component of interaction—whether the office was courteous and attentive (called courtesy) towards the citizens. Figure 12-12 provides the citizens' ratings for courtesy by function. The ratings ranged from 81 to 92 percent.

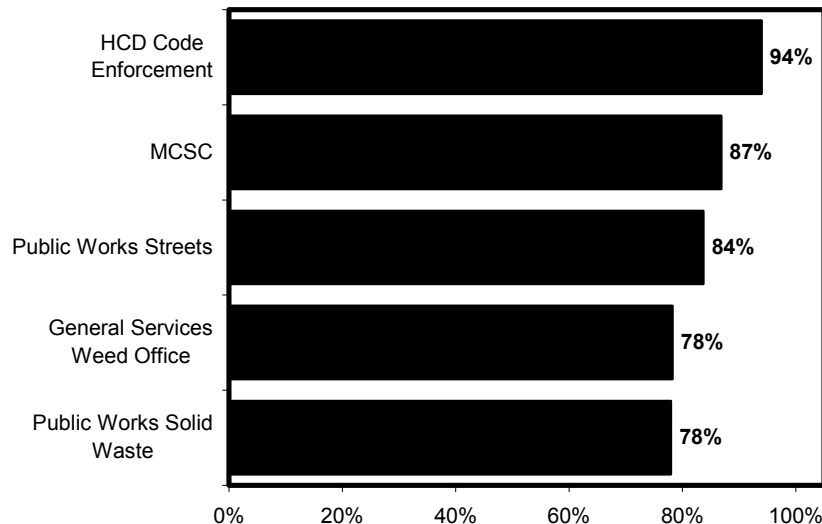
Figure 12-13 provides the same ratings for courtesy, but for the agencies that did the intake. The ratings suggest three tiers. The top tier, which was at 94 percent, included the Division of Housing and Community Development's code enforcement.

**Figure 12-12: Citizens' Perception of Contact with City Function - Office Courteous and Attentive**



The second tier of Figure 12-13, which ranged from 84 percent to 87 percent, included the Mayor's Citizen Service Center and Public Works' street maintenance. The third tier, at 78 percent included the General Services Division's weed office that deals with vacant lots and the Public Works Division's solid waste management.

**Figure 12-13: Citizens' Perception of Contact with City Agency - Office Courteous and Attentive**



Overall, the citizens' ratings for interaction suggest the Mayor's Citizen Service Center and operating agencies had similar scores.



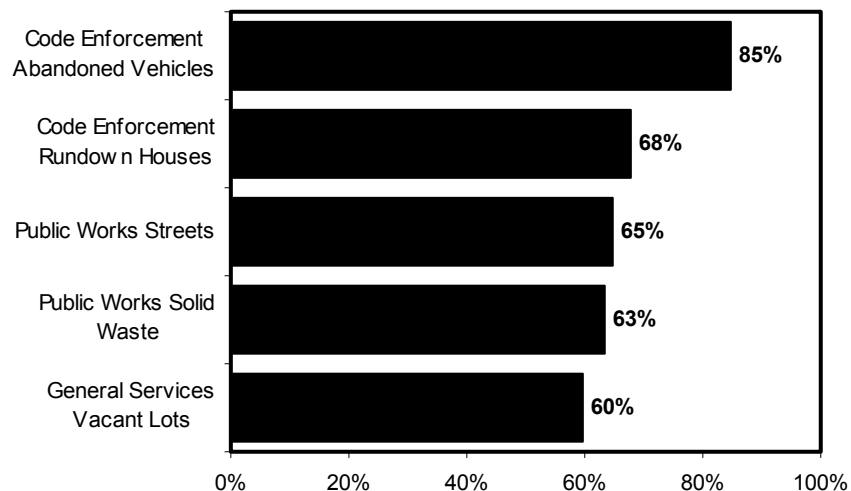
## Responsiveness

This section will provide information about the two components of responsiveness—promptness and performance. The data will be presented for agencies, which are responsible for addressing the problem.

Figure 12-14 provides information by agency for promptness in responding to the citizens' concerns. Housing and Community Development's code enforcement response to abandoned vehicles had the highest score with 85 percent.

Four other services had lower scores that ranged from 60 percent to 68 percent. These included the Housing and Community Development's housing code Enforcement, the Public Services Division's street maintenance, the Public Works Division's solid waste, and the General Service's Division's weed office that deals with vacant lots.

**Figure 12-14: Citizens' Perception of Contact with City  
Function Responded Promptly**



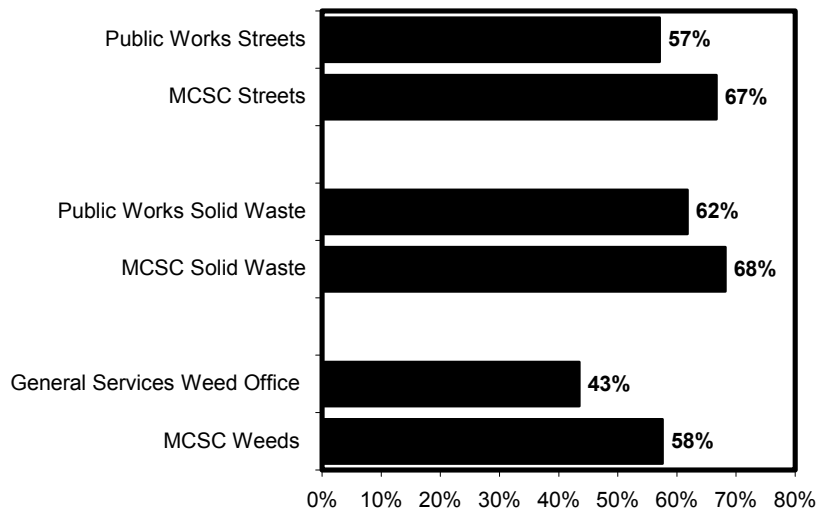
Next, this information is summarized to discuss some policy implications. Figure 12-15 provides promptness information by intake agency for three functions—streets, solid waste, and weeds. A later figure will provide the same information for performance. These were the only three functions for which the distributions were large enough to split between the operating agency and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. However, this is an area of small sample sizes and the data are only suggestive. These data must be used very carefully and more extensive analysis should be done in the future to confirm these findings.

Figure 12-15 displays the information for promptness and compares the results according to whether the intake was through the operating agency or the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. There were only minimal differences for solid waste. This finding suggests that for this solid waste the system is working appropriately—and it is an improvement when compared to 2004.

There was a 10 percent difference in promptness between intake through streets and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center.

There was an even greater difference in promptness between the weed office and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. The General Services Division's weed office and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center had a difference of 15 percent in the 2005 Memphis Poll. There was a 28 percent difference between these agencies in 2004. Although the results show improvement, it might be suggested that there needs to be an additional narrowing of the gap. The discussion below will discuss some of the reasons for these differences.

**Figure 12-15: Comparing Agency Promptness:  
MCSC and Solid Waste/Weeds/Streets**



Next, this section discusses performance of the agencies, which was defined as solving the problem that prompted the citizens to contact City Hall.

Figure 12-16 shows the ratings for performance. The top tier at 91 percent included only the Housing and Community Development's Housing and Community Development's abandoned vehicle service. The second tier, ranging from 72 percent to 73 percent included the Public Works Division's solid waste

management and the General Services Division's weed office that deals with vacant lots.

The lowest tier, ranging from 60 to 66 percent, included Public Works Division's street maintenance and Housing and Community Development's housing code enforcement. Housing and Community Development's housing code enforcement was at the bottom of the list well below the overall average for the City. However, this result is a vast improvement over last year's rating when the service was administered by the Neighborhoods Division. There was a 28 percent improvement in ratings for responsiveness for 2005 compared to 2004.

**Figure 12-16: Citizens' Perception of Contact with City  
Function - Performance by Solving Concerns**

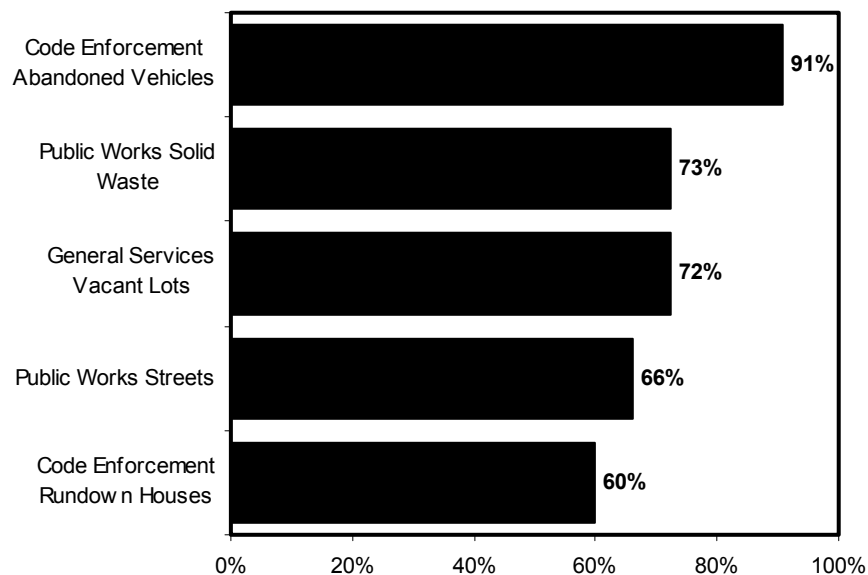


Figure 12-17 displays the findings for performance and compares the results according to whether the intake was through the operating agency or the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. It shows that there were only minimal differences in performance when comparing intake done by Public Works and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. This is an improvement from the 2004 Memphis Poll where the performance for cases generated from the Mayor's Citizen Service Center was not nearly as effective as those that were generated by Public Works.

In contrast, Figure 12-17 shows there was an 11 percent difference in the performance between the General Services' weed office and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. The performance of the weed office was not as positive as the

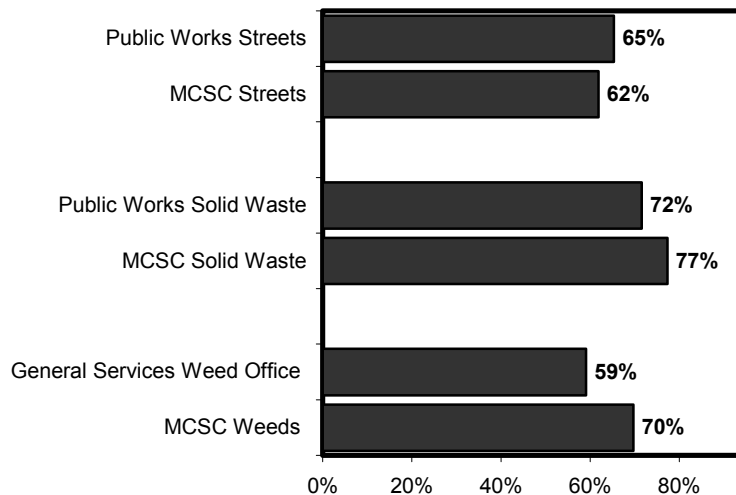
performance of the cases that were generated through the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. This contrast is discussed below.

## Summarizing the Weed Office Findings

This section will address issues related to the weed office and calls related to vacant lots. Mowing weeds on vacant lot is one of the most important services the City provides due to the increasing number of vacant lots and their negative impact on neighborhoods. Vacant lots were one of the top physical concerns that citizens had about their neighborhoods.

Intake for 41 percent of the cases came through the office itself and 59 percent came through the Mayor's Citizen Service Center. The weed office was on the low end of the ratings for operating agencies for phone professionalism, courtesy, and promptness. The office was in the middle of the City contacting ratings for performance. Both promptness and performance scores were less positive when the intake was through the office itself rather than the Mayor's Citizen Service Center.

**Figure 12-17: Comparing Agency Performance:  
MCSC and Solid Waste/Weeds/Streets**



The Director of General Services and the staff of the weed office met with the director of the Memphis Poll in June of 2004 to discuss some of the findings of the 2004 Memphis Poll, which also revealed some problematic elements. The staff thought the reason for the more negative assessment of cases handled by their office was because the Mayor's Citizens Center was "handing off" difficult and perhaps irreconcilable cases to them. For example, the weed office would

not be able to mow Shelby County vacant lots, but it might receive calls expecting them to do the mowing.

The staff asked for more information in the 2005 Memphis Poll. Several additional questions were added to the Poll. These data need to be used carefully since the total number of responses was very low. There were a total of 93 cases, but citizens were not always able to provide factual information about the cases.

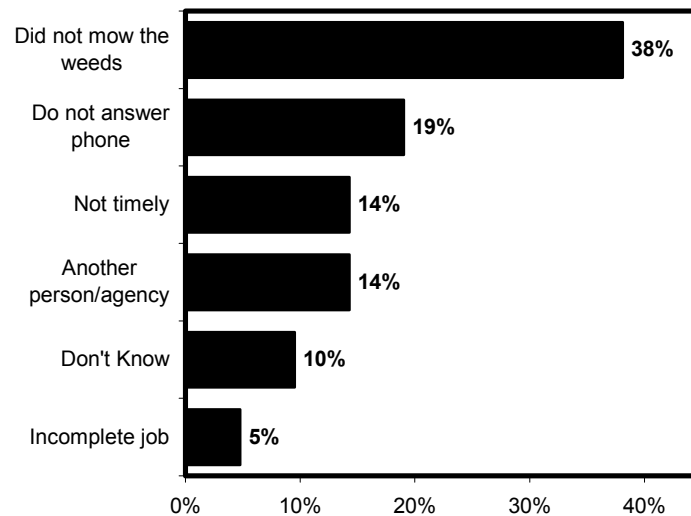
Fourteen (14) percent of the cases which the Poll identified as related to the weed office also were handled by the Mayor's Citizen Service Center—called dual cases. Eighty-six (86) percent of the cases came only to the weed office—called weed office cases. However, the results were mixed for phone professionalism (same results), courtesy (dual far less positive), promptness (dual far less positive), and performance (dual more positive).

Next, the Memphis Poll quizzed citizens that were not satisfied with the performance of the weed agency. The Poll asked why the citizens thought the problem was not solved. The responses were a combination of information they received from City Hall and their own assessment. The data was in qualitative form and it was coded for use in this report.

Figure 12-18 displays the coding of the citizens' comments. Thirty-eight (38) percent said that the weeds were not mowed. Other comments were that the weed office did not answer their phone (19 percent), the weed cutting was not timely (14 percent), they were told another agency or person was responsible for cutting the weeds (14 percent), they did not know (10 percent), and the job was incomplete (5 percent). However, these findings are limited because of the small number of cases.

In conclusion, these data suggest a citizenry that was frustrated with their problem and that the way in which both the Mayor's Citizen Service Center and the weed office dealt with the case was not helpful.

**Figure 12-18: Reasons Not Satisfied with Performance of Weed Office**



In addition, Shelby County owns many vacant lots in the City and the County does not effectively maintain those lots. Perhaps some coordination between the Mayor's Citizen Service Center and Shelby County might help to deal with this problem. In addition, there are suggestions that some training might be provided to the weed office staff on how to deal with citizens that are highly frustrated.<sup>23</sup>

## Race and Contacting

Overall, the results on contacting were positive for the Memphis Poll. Citizens were more satisfied with both interaction and responsiveness than in previous years of the Memphis Poll.

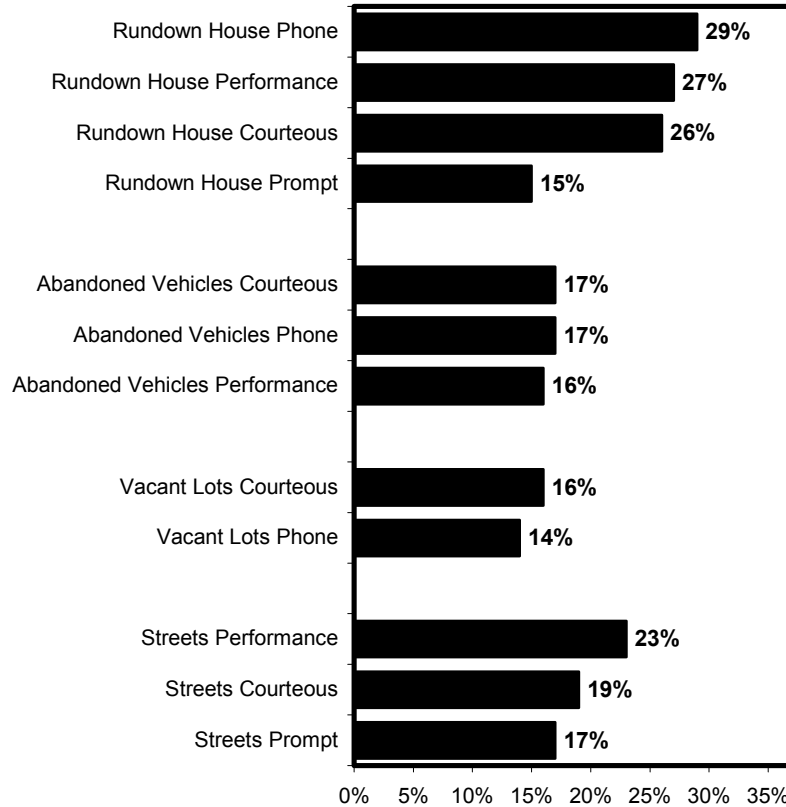
However, as discussed in Chapter 2, movers (citizens that expected to move from the City) were much less positive about their contacts with City Hall. Movers were also more apt to be white residents.

Figure 12-19 shows that white residents were also considerably less satisfied with their contacts with City Hall. In fact, the differences are historically high for the Memphis Poll. Whites were less satisfied with contacts related to rundown houses, abandoned vehicles, vacant lots, and streets.

---

<sup>23</sup> The Memphis Poll is especially appreciative of the staff of the General Services Division and the weed office. It was a pleasure to work with them on this issue and they were especially accommodating as they tried to learn more about how citizens' perceived their services.

**Figure 12-19: Contacting City Hall: Less Positive for Whites than African Americans**



These troubling findings appear to be intersecting with decisions to move from the City. There is no way of knowing if white citizens are receiving less positive treatment from City Hall, or if they have a negative perception that leads them to assess the contact in negative terms. Whatever the reasons, some effort needs to be made to proactively respond to these citizens.

### **Key Findings**

- ❑ Citizens' ratings for interaction and responsiveness showed overall improvement over the last several years.
- ❑ Operating agencies were much more involved in intake for complaints than expected.
- ❑ Overall, the ratings for interaction of the operating agencies and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center were about the same.
- ❑ Housing code enforcement experienced a large improvement in responsiveness.
- ❑ The Memphis Poll found that white citizens were overwhelmingly less positive in their assessments of contacting with City Hall. These differences were historically high and troubling.



# Chapter 13

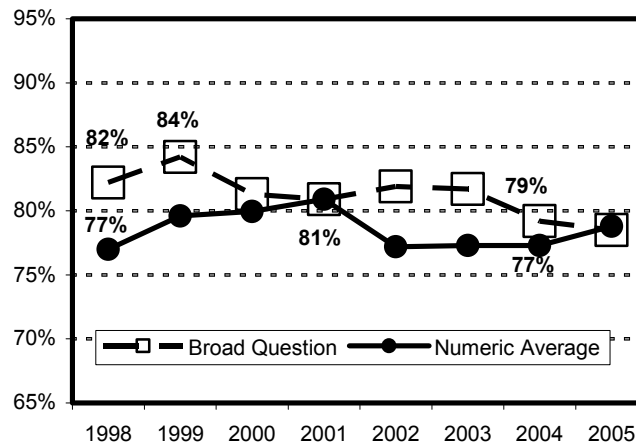
## Comparison of Services

This chapter allows the reader to make direct comparisons among various City services. It assesses both the individual service measures and groups services by division. Although complex, this chapter provides the reader with a documented procedure for analyzing services. The reader should carefully review the tables in this chapter to obtain a sense of how the citizens ranked the services.

### Overall Ranking of the City

The Poll asked citizens a broad question on how satisfied they were with the overall services provided by the City of Memphis. Figure 13-1 shows that 79 percent of the citizens were satisfied with overall City services.

**Figure 13-1: Overall Scores for City Services**



The Memphis Poll also prepared a composite measure that was the numeric average of the specific service categories discussed in earlier chapters. The composite measure showed that 79 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's services. This number was very similar to 2004 and was slightly higher than earlier years of the Memphis Poll.

Several new questions on neighborhood services were added to the 2005 Memphis Poll and these might have had at least a minimal effect on the overall measures. However, there were so many services being examined that even a small number of new services did not seem to affect the stability of this measure.

In summary, these overall measures continue to show that citizens are satisfied with City services.

## **Comparing Specific Services**

The next section provides a comprehensive rating of services. Because of the large number of services, the above average services were placed in Figure 13-2 and the below average services were placed in Figure 13-3. The broad average for overall services, 79 percent, was used for these computations. These data provide the reader with the opportunity to compare the myriad of services offered by the City of Memphis.

### **Above Average Services**

The highest rated services had positive scores that ranged from 95 to 99 percent and are clustered at the top of Figure 13-2. All of these services received citizens' approval rates of 95 percent or more, which was an impressive citizen rating. These services include the fire department (respectfulness, promptness, and performance), EMS (respectfulness, promptness, and performance), the Public Library System (main library, availability of materials, and helpfulness of staff), Park Services Division (Pink Palace, Botanic Garden, and Zoo), and Public Works Division (solid waste promptness).

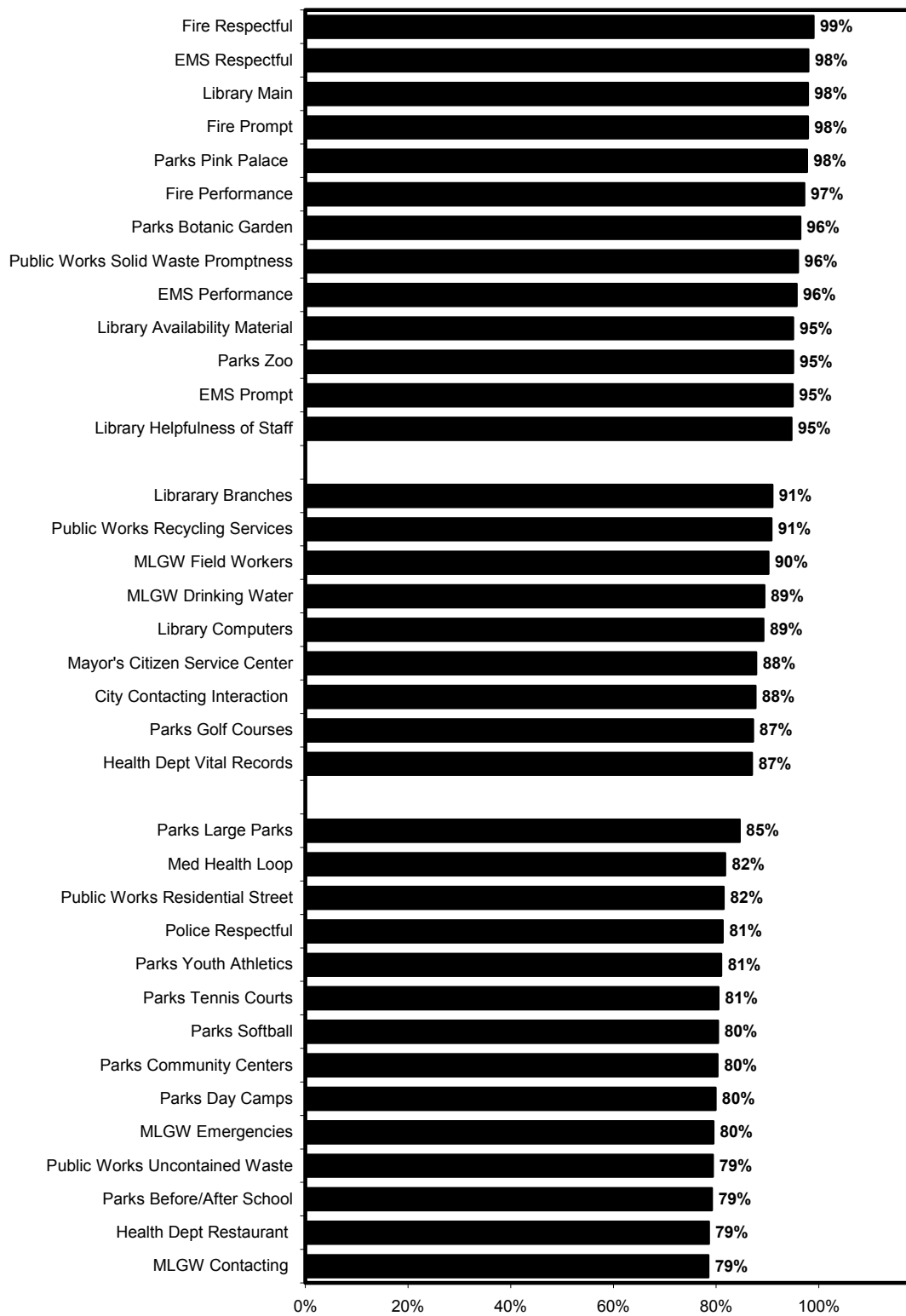
The second highest tier of above average services ranged from 87 percent to 91 percent. These services included: Public Libraries (branches and computers), Public Works Division (recycling services), MLGW (field workers and drinking water), Mayor's Citizen Service Center's (interaction), overall (contacting interaction<sup>24</sup>), Park Services Division (golf courses), and Health Department (vital records).

The third highest tier of above average services ranged from 79 percent to 85 percent. The third highest tier included: Parks Services Division (larger parks, youth athletics, tennis courts, softball, community centers, day camps, before/after school programs), Health Department (Health Loop, restaurant inspection), Public Works Division (residential streets, uncontained waste), Police Department (respectfulness), and MLGW (emergencies, contacting).

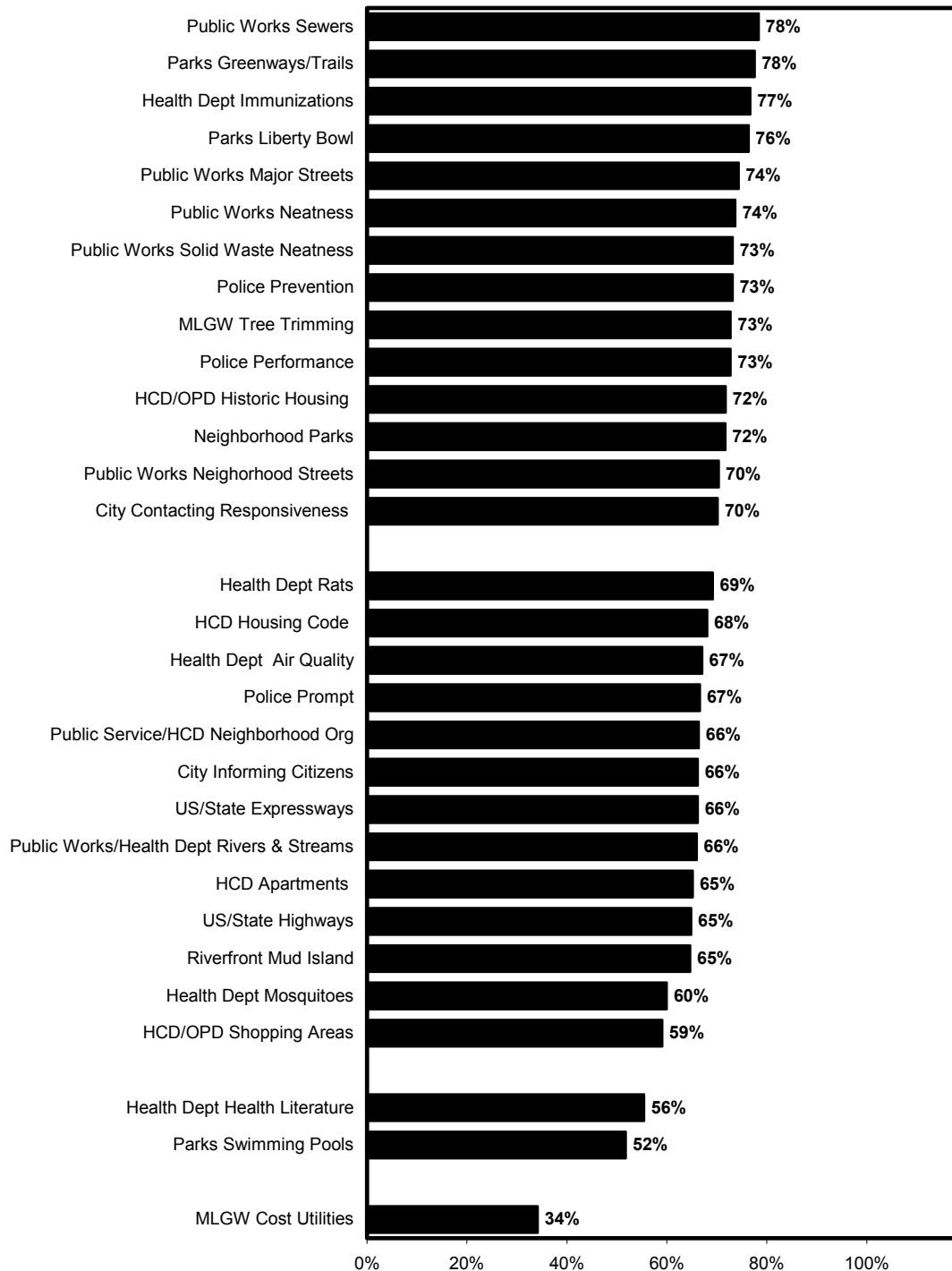
---

<sup>24</sup> Because of the large number of contacting service categories, only three of the measures are used in this chapter: overall interaction, overall responsiveness, and the Mayor's Citizen Service Center's interaction.

**Figure 13-2: Above Average Services**



**Figure 13-3: Below Average Services**



## Below Average Services

The below average services are displayed in Figure 13-3. Again, the overall rating for overall City services was 79 percent. However, below average does

not mean services were inadequate. It simply means that services were not as highly rated as other services in the City. However, as the services reach levels well below average, they may be much more problematic.

Slightly below average services ranged from 70 percent to 78 percent. These services included: Public Works Division (sewers, major streets, solid waste neatness, and neighborhood streets), Parks Services Division (greenways/trails, Liberty Bowl, neighborhood parks), Health Department (immunization), Police Services Division (prevention, performance), MLGW (tree trimming), HCD/OPD (preserving historic housing), and overall City (contacting responsiveness).

Other services were further below average and they ranged from 59 to 69 percent. These services included: Health Department (air quality and controlling mosquitoes), Division of Housing and Community Development (housing code enforcement and apartments/public housing), Police Services Division (promptness), Division of Housing and Community Development /Public Services Division (neighborhood organizations), overall City (informing citizens), US/State (expressways and highways), Public Works Division/Health Department (improving rivers and streams), Riverfront Development Corporation (Mud Island), Division of Housing, and Community Development/Office of Planning and Development (shopping areas).

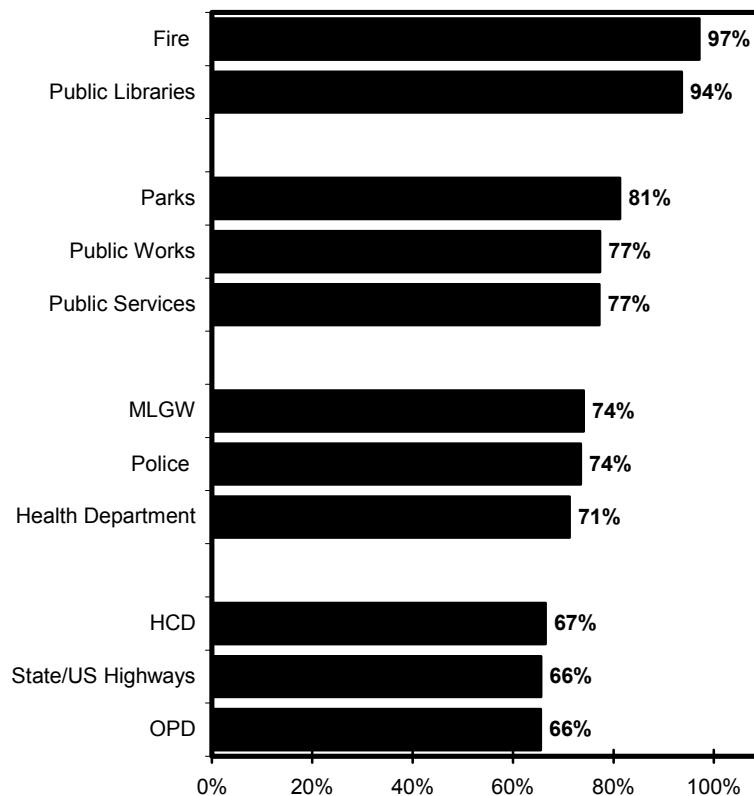
The services rated well below average ranged from 52 to 56 percent. These services included: Health Department (health literature) and Parks Services Division (swimming pools).

Only one service rated the very lowest this year and that was Memphis Light Gas and Water's rating for the cost of utilities. This is one of the very lowest ratings ever received in the history of the Memphis Poll.

## **Comparison by Divisions**

Figure 13-4 compares the overall score of each division by averaging the scores for the specific service categories for which they were responsible.

**Figure 13-4: Comparison of Overall Score by Administrative Departments**



The highest rated divisions had ratings from 94 to 97 percent. The Division of Fire Services stands out as the highest rated division with a 97 percent rating. The second highest rated division was the Public Libraries with 94 percent.

The second tier of divisions had ratings ranging from 77 to 81 percent. These average rated divisions are near the overall average for all city services. The Park Services average score was 81 percent, which was above the overall average for City services. The Public Works Division and Public Service Division follow with 77 percent ratings, slightly below the overall City average.

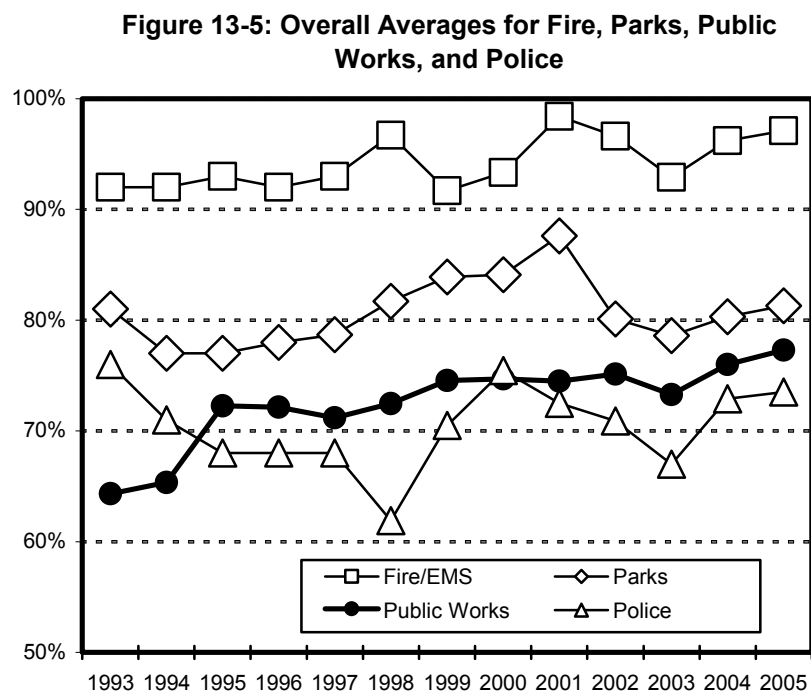
Three other divisions had overall scores just slightly below average with ratings ranging from 71 to 74 percent. These divisions are the MLGW, the Police Services Division, and the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department.

Three divisions/areas had overall ratings that were ranked below average. These divisions were Housing and Community Development (HCD), the State/US in their maintenance of highways, and the Office of Planning and Development (OPD).

## Trends

The Memphis Poll provides overall trend data for City divisions. Figure 13-5 shows the four divisions that had data for the entire thirteen years of the Memphis Poll.

The Division of Fire Services has the most impressive trend line. All of its overall measures during the thirteen years of the Memphis Poll exceed 90 percent. This is a division that has a great long-term track record in the Memphis Poll.



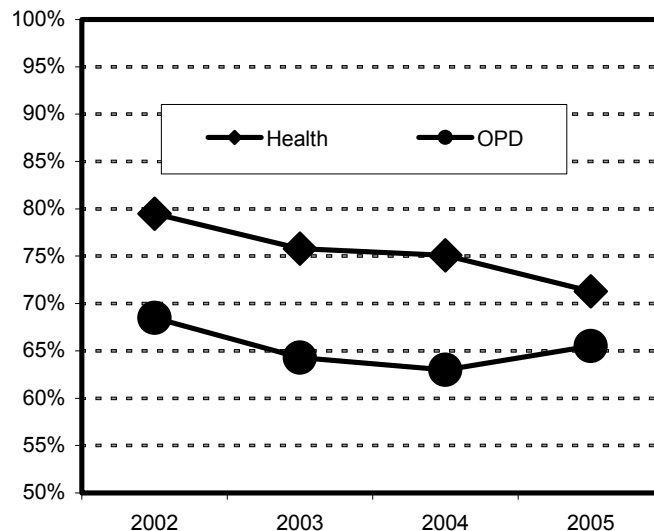
The Park Services Division was rated above average in 2005. However, there are some troubling aspects to the trend line. From 1994 to 2001, Parks Services made incremental improvements in its services that were recognized by the citizens. The increases in any one-year were small, but overall the trend line showed a consistent improvement in services. There was a precipitous decline from 2001 to 2002. However it appears that the results for Park Services have stabilized around 80 percent for the last three years.

Next, the Public Works Division was just below average. The data for 1993 and 1994 might be skewed because a number of new measures were added. If the

division is examined from 1995, the trend shows a remarkable stability and an incremental improvement from year to year of the Memphis Poll.

Finally, the Police Services Division is also slightly below average. It has the most complex trend line of any division. The trend line for the police shows four distinct patterns in the thirteen years of the Memphis Poll. The first period from 1993 to 1998 showed a steep decline in police ratings. There were two years of improved ratings from 1998 to 2000. In fact, the improvement was very large and returned the division to the level it enjoyed in 1993. The third period from 2000 to 2003 showed an incremental decline in police ratings. The fourth period between 2003 and 2005 showed a distinct improvement and stabilization in the citizens' ratings.

**Figure 13-6: Overall Averages for Health Department and OPD**



There were some additional trend charts for services with only three years of information available. These services are displayed in three separate charts since the trend lines would otherwise overlap each other and be difficult to read.

Figure 13-6 provides the trend line for the Health Department. It shows an incremental decline over the four years in which the citizens were asked to rate their services.

Figure 13-6 shows that OPD's ratings had about a five percent range and that it does not appear that the service is improving.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The Memphis Poll would like expand the questions asked about this agency by asking citizens to rate the role of the agency in planning and zoning issues in subsequent Polls.



Figure 13-7 shows the trend line for the Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The line is flat showing consistency in ratings over time, albeit at a low level far below average for overall City services. Several new services were added to this division in 2004 and these did not appear to change the ratings.<sup>26</sup>

The trend line for the Division of Public Services and Neighborhoods is difficult to interpret since several services were moved from the division in 2004. Figure 13-7 was modified from previous years of the Memphis Poll to include only the average for the two services that it now administers. The data suggest improvements in ratings from 2002 to 2004. The rating for both 2004 and 2005 were the same.

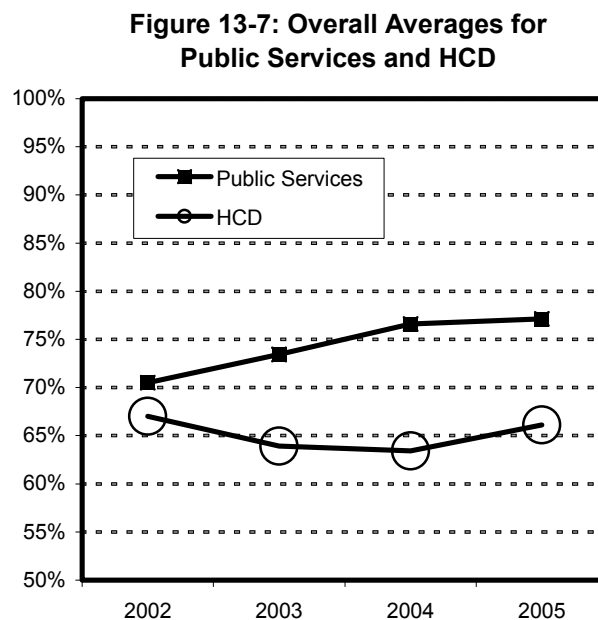


Figure 13-8 shows the trend line data for the Public Libraries and Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW). The Memphis Poll did not ask questions about these two agencies in 2004.

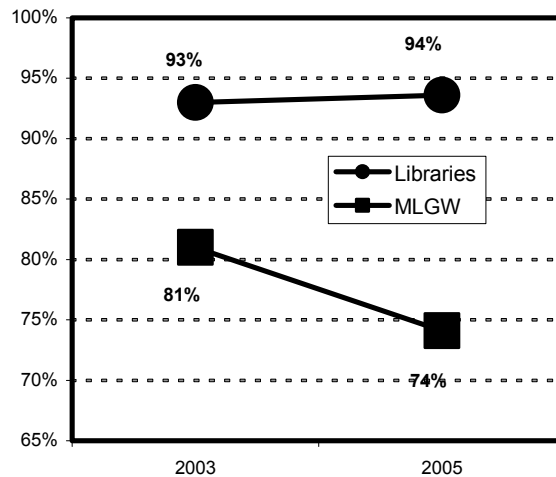
The Public Library System enjoys consistently high citizens' ratings. It is among the "signature" services of the City of Memphis.

---

<sup>26</sup> This is only a tentative assessment because of the difficulty of rating all of its functions that included some of the contacting measures not used in this chapter—for example the performance of housing code enforcement.

In contrast, MLGW experienced a dramatic decline in its ratings from above average in 2003 to below average in 2005. This decline is directly related to the significant drop in the ratings for the cost of utilities provided by MLGW.

**Figure 13-8: Overall Averages for Public Libraries and MLGW**



### Key Findings

- ❑ The overall ratings of City services were very positive.
- ❑ The Division of Fire services has an impressive, long-term track record in the Memphis Poll with the highest ratings over time. The Public Libraries and the public learning components of the Division of Park Service also have received very high ratings.
- ❑ According to the citizens, the least effective service in City government is the MLGW's cost of utilities.
- ❑ The next lowest rated services included the Division of Park Services' public swimming pools and the Health Department's providing health literature.

# Chapter 14

## Technical Issues

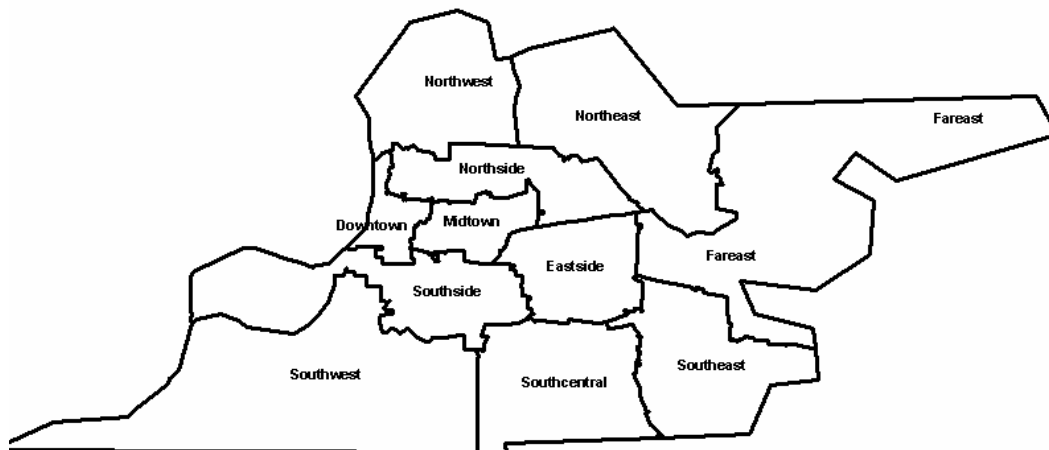
### The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is available on the City of Memphis website:  
[www.memphistn.gov](http://www.memphistn.gov).

### The Polling Map

The Memphis Poll interviewed citizens from each section of the City in proportion to the population of the City. The information for each section of the City is displayed in several maps in this report. This map displays the Fareast differently than the actual borders so that the data can be more easily understood. Figure 14-1 shows the base map that was generated from this effort.

**Figure 14-1**  
**Simplified Map**  
**Memphis Poll Areas**



The map is a simplification that allows the reader to visually understand how the information is being analyzed. The map includes eleven areas that represent different sections of the City. The names of the areas are geographically based and do not necessarily reflect commonly used names. The areas are based on zip codes. It was important in creating these areas to include sections of both the older city and the newer annexed areas. Some conventions have been used in the

naming of the areas that emphasize the ability to display the area names in the maps. For example, “Fareast” is used to name the area that includes Cordova, Countrywood, and other sections that are at the periphery of the City.

The numbers of citizens in the areas are displayed in Figure 14-2. The population ranged from the smallest areas called Northwest with 50 citizens to the largest area called Southwest with 114 citizens. The differences in citizens by area were a function of the zip codes that were available and a desire to keep areas somewhat similar in characteristics. On the other hand, an attempt was also made to include as many citizens as possible from each area.

**Figure 14-2: Number of Respondents by Polling Area**

<b>Name of Area</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Northwest	50	5%
Fareast	51	6%
Downtown	58	6%
Southcentral	63	7%
Midtown	76	8%
Northeast	81	9%
Northside	96	11%
Southside	104	11%
Eastside	108	12%
Southeast	110	12%
Southwest	114	13%

The findings of the Memphis Poll examined by section of the City must be used carefully since each area has a smaller sample size than the information used for the City as a whole. There have been some requests to provide data for even smaller areas by zip codes. However, the Memphis Poll will not provide this data because of the instability of smaller sample sizes.

The total number of respondents in the 2005 Memphis Poll was 911. Normally, the Memphis Poll has about 650 respondents. The higher numbers were a one year experiment to test whether the results were different—the results did not seem to be affected by this change.